العَقِيدَةُ الطَّحَاوِيَّة

Al-'Aqída Al-Ṭaḥáwiyya

Imám Abú Ja'far al-Ṭaḥāwí

Prepared by
Mawlana Fahim Hoosen

Arabic Text with
English Translation and Commentary

بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

العقيدة الطحاوية

al-ʿAqīda al-Ṭaḥāwiyya

Imām Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad bin Salāma al-Azdī al-Ṭaḥāwī (d. 321 A.H)

English Translation and Commentary

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Transliteration Table

Arabic	Symbol
ا	ā
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ

Arabic	Symbol
ع	ʿ
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
ه هـ	h
و	w aw, ū
ي	y ay, ī
ء	ʾ

Imām al-Ṭaḥāwī

Imām Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad bin Salāma al-Azdī, is popularly known as Imām al-Ṭaḥāwi, so-called after his birth-place, Ṭaḥā, a town in Egypt. His forefathers came from Yemen to Egypt and settled there after it had come under Muslim rule. He was among the most outstanding authorities of the Islamic world in the sciences of Ḥadīth and Fiqh (jurisprudence). He lived from 229 A.H. to 321 A.H., a time when both the direct and indirect disciples of the four Imāms: Imām Abū Ḥanīfa, Imām Mālik, Imām al-Shāfiʿī and Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal - were teaching and practising. This period was the zenith of Ḥadīth and Fiqh studies, and Imām al-Ṭaḥawi studied with all the living authorities of the day.

He began as a student of his maternal uncle, Abū Ibrāhīm Ismaʿīl ibn Yaḥyā al-Muzanī, a leading student of Imām al-Shāfiʿī. However he later took up the study of Ḥanafī Fiqh under Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad ibn Abī ʿImrān who was the Chief Qāḍī of Egypt at the time. Instinctively Imām Ṭaḥawi felt drawn to the corpus of Imām Abu Ḥanīfa's works. He began devoting his attention to studying Ḥanafī works and this eventually led to his joining the Ḥanafī school of Islamic jurisprudence.

Imām Ṭaḥawi stands out not only as a prominent follower of the Ḥanafī School but, in view or his vast erudition and remarkable powers of assimilation, as one of its leading scholars. His monumental scholarly works, such as *Sharḥ Maʿānī al-Āthār* and *Mushkil al-Āthār*, are encyclopaedic in

scope and have long been regarded as indispensable for training students of Ḥadīth and Fiqh.

Imām Al-Ṭaḥāwī, like Imām al-Māturīdī, (Abū Manṣūr ibn Muḥammad al-Māturīdi of Samarqand) was a follower of Imām Abū Ḥanīfa in jurisprudence as well as in theology.

Al-ʿAqīda Al-Taḥāwiyya

This short treatise on theology written by Imām Ṭaḥāwī was titled *Bayān al-Sunna wa l-Jamāʿa* and is commonly known as *al-ʿAqīda al-Taḥāwiyya*. The importance of this creed lies in the fact that it corroborates the views of Imām Abū Ḥanīfa, the founder of the Ḥanafī school, that have come down to us from different sources.

Imām Ṭaḥāwi does not make an attempt to explain the views of Imām Abū Ḥanīfa or to solve the old theological problems by advancing any new arguments. His sole aim was to give a summary of the views of the Imām and to show indirectly that they were in conformity with the traditional views of the orthodox school.

Imām Ṭaḥāwī's treatise, though small in size, is a basic text for all times, listing what a Muslim must know and believe and inwardly comprehend. It can be said to represent the creed of both the Ashʿarīs and the Māturīdīs, especially the latter, given his being a follower of the Ḥanafī school. The doctrines enumerated in this work are entirely derived from the undisputed primary sources of religion, the Qurʾān and the confirmed Ḥadīth.

This text, representative of the viewpoint of *Ahl al-Sunna wa l-Jamāʿa*, has long been the most widely acclaimed, and indeed indispensable, reference work on Muslim beliefs.

Preface

Whilst teaching *al-ʿAqīda al-Ṭaḥāwiyya* at *Madrasa Ḥamīdiyya* from 2002 to 2006, the idea for compiling a book in English for the benefit of the general public emerged. With this in mind I began collecting notes from the various Arabic commentaries and collating them under the relevant points in the text.

The translation that formed the basis of the English text that I used was that of Iqbal Ahmad Aʿzami, which was the best English translation available at the time. Although this translation was used as a starting point, many amendments were made to it as deemed appropriate.

The commentary was essentially based on the available Arabic commentaries of the text with extensive reference to commentaries by the following scholars:

1. ʿAbd al-Ghanī Al-Ghunaymī al-Maydānī (d. 1298)
2. Abū Ḥafṣ Sirāj al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn Isḥāq al-Ghaznawī al-Hindī (d.773) - although I used the edition (wrongly) ascribed to Akmal al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Bābartī (d.786)
3. Ḥasan Kāfī al-Aqḥiṣārī al-Busnawī (d. 1024)

Other commentaries and books of ʿAqīda were also referred to occasionally.

This brief commentary aims to maintain a considerable degree of simplicity, avoiding technical discussions that are not relevant to the average person.

The focus is explaining the correct belief rather than involving the reader in the intricacies of debate around theological issues.

Verses of the Qurʾān and narrations of Ḥadīth are briefly quoted in support of the doctrines listed by Imām Ṭaḥawī. I have attempted to ensure the accuracy of these references to the best of my ability by mentioning the Sūra and verse number or the Ḥadīth source. However a detailed treatment of these topics from the sources have been omitted as, this being a book on ʿ Aqīda, the aspect of belief only was given consideration.

While the permanent relevance of the statements of belief in the ʿAqīda are obvious, the historical weight and relevance of certain of these statements can be properly appreciated only if the work is used as a text for study under the guidance of some learned scholar able to elucidate its arguments fully, with reference to the intellectual and historical background of the sects refuted in the work. Since the present book is intended exactly as one such aid towards understanding the details of Islamic belief with clarity, it is hoped that it will be of benefit to the reader.

May Allah grant us a true understanding of faith and count us among those described by the Prophet ﷺ as the Saved Group.

Fahim Hoosen
Durban, South Africa
14 October 2011

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, Most Merciful

قال العلامة حجة الإسلام أبو جعفر الوراق الطحاوي بمصر رحمه الله:

The Great Scholar, Proof of Islām, Abū Jaʿfar al-Warrāq al-Ṭaḥāwī said, whilst in Egypt:

هذا ذكر بيان عقيدة أهل السنة والجماعة على مذهب فقهاء الملة أبي حنيفة النعمان ابن ثابت الكوفي ، وأبي يوسف يعقوب بن إبراهيم الأنصاري ، وأبي عبد الله محمد بن الحسن الشيباني ، رضوان الله عليهم أجمعين ، وما يعتقدون من أصولِ الدين ، ويدينون به لرب العالمين

This is an exposition of the beliefs of the *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamāʿa*[1], according to the Jurists of this religion, Abū Ḥanīfa Nuʿmān ibn Thābit

[1] *Ahl al-Sunnah wa l-Jamāʿa* literally translates as 'the people of the way and the group' and broadly refers to Muslim orthodoxy and consensus. The 'way' signifies that of the Prophet ﷺ and the 'group' refers to his noble companions (Ṣaḥāba), and their successors (Tābiʿīn) and those after them represented by the main spectrum of Muslims in every age.

It is narrated in a ḥadīth:

عن أبي هريرة أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال تفرقت اليهود على إحدى وسبعين أو اثنتين وسبعين فرقة والنصارى مثل ذلك وتفترق أمتي على ثلاث سبعين فرقة

"The Jews split into seventy one or seventy two factions; and likewise the Christians. My *Umma* will split into 73 factions."

[al-Tirmidhī]

In another narration the following addition appears:

كلها في النار إلا ملة واحدة فقيل له : ما الواحدة ؟ قال : ما أنا عليه اليوم وأصحابي

"All of those factions will be in the Fire (of *Jahannam*) except one." The companions asked: "Who are they, O Messenger of Allah?" The Prophet ﷺ replied: "Those that follow my way and that of my companions."

[Mustadrak al-Ḥākim]

In a narration of ibn Mājah the Prophet ﷺ replied: الجماعة "the group" i.e. those that follow the way of the companions and hold firm onto their beliefs.

al-Kūfī[2], Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb ibn Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī[3] and Abū ʿAbdullāh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī[4] - May Allah be pleased with them all - and what they believe with respect to the fundamentals of religion[5] and have faith in regarding the Lord of the Worlds.

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[2] Abū Ḥanīfa Nuʿmān ibn Thābit al-Kūfī (d. 150 A.H.), called "The Imām" by Abū Dāwūd, is known in the Islamic world as "The Greatest Imām" (al-Imām al-Aʿẓam.) His school of jurisprudence has the largest number of followers among the four schools of *Ahl al-Sunna*. He is the first of the four Mujtahid Imāms and the only Successor (*tābiʿī*) among them, having seen the companions Anas ibn Mālik, ʿAbd Allah ibn Abī Awfā, Sahl ibn Saʿd al-Sāʿidī, Abū al-Ṭufayl, and ʿĀmir ibn Wāthilah.

[3] Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb ibn Ibrāhīm al-Anṣāri al-Kūfi (d. 182 A.H.) was one of the most famous students of Imām Abū Ḥanīfa. He served as the chief religious judge (qāḍī) under the Abbasid caliph Harūn al-Rashīd. Abū Yūsuf wrote *Kitāb al-Kharāj* (*Book on Taxation*), which is a basic treatise on the issues of public finance in Islamic Law.

[4] Abū ʿAbdullāh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Farqad al-Shaybānī was born in Wāsiṭ in 132 A.H., and grew up in Kūfa. He was a student of Imām Abū Ḥanīfa and a teacher of Imām al-Shāfiʿī. He passed away in Rayy in 189 A.H.

[5] The fundamentals of religion (*Uṣūl al-Dīn*) refers to *ʿAqāʾid* or the 'tenets of faith'. The science of Islamic theology is also known as *ʿIlm Uṣūl al-Dīn* (the science of the fundamentals of religion), *ʿIlm al-ʿAqāʾid* (the science of the

نقول في توحيد الله معتقدين بتوفيق الله

We say with respect to the Oneness of Allah, believing by Allah's assistance:

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tenets of faith), *ʿIlm al-Tawḥīd wa l-Ṣifāt* (the science of monotheism and divine attributes) or *ʿIlm al-Kalām* (the science of theology.)

Scholars have defined this science as being 'the study of the tenets of faith from their definitive sources.'

It has also been defined as 'the science that deals with the divine names, attributes and actions; the states of created things (viz. angels, prophets, saints, leaders) and the beginning and end of creation in order to engender conviction in the pact of faith and remove all doubts.'

Its subject matter is 'all known things with relation to their establishment of the tenets of faith.' The aim of the study of this science is 'to consolidate belief and conviction in the divine law (*Sharīʿa*) leading to the attainment of success in both worlds.'

إن الله واحد لا شريك له

Indeed Allah[6] is One[7]. He has no partner[8].

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[6] The first duty of the slaves of Allah is to believe in His existence as the sole Originator of creation. This conviction is arrived at by means of reflection and pondering over the universe and its ephemeral contents. Every temporal being (*mumkin al-wujūd*) necessarily requires a Being whose existence is absolute (*wājib al-wujūd*) to effect its existence.

Belief in the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth are consequential to belief in the Originator of creation (Allah) and His Messenger ﷺ.

In the Qurʾān, Allah Taʿālā tells us:

سَنُرِيهِمۡ ءَايَٰتِنَا فِي ٱلۡأٓفَاقِ وَفِيٓ أَنفُسِهِمۡ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمۡ أَنَّهُ ٱلۡحَقُّۗ

We shall show them Our signs in every region of the earth and in themselves, until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth.

[Sūra Fuṣṣilat 53]

This method of logical deduction was the way of all the previous prophets and earlier scholars of this Umma. (See Sūras Hūd 28 and 32, Al-Anʿām 76 to 83, Al-Anbiyā 58, Al-Baqarah 258 and Al-Naḥl 125.) It is Allah's command that we exercise our intellect in reflecting over His signs in order to repel any doubts that may arise in the mind. The science of *ʿIlm al-Kalām* seeks to achieve the same objective.

A group of atheists once approached the great Imām, Abū Ḥanīfa with the intention of killing him. The Imām asked them what they would say about a person who claims that he has seen a ship laden with goods sailing on the sea transporting the goods from one shore to another. The goods are piled onto the ship automatically and are similarly off-loaded by themselves upon reaching their destination. The ship navigates the waves perfectly all by itself with no sailor to steer it.

They replied that no sane human would accept such a nonsensical contention. Thereupon the Imām remarked: "Pity upon your intelligence. If a mere ship cannot sail smoothly without a sailor, how then can it be ever possible that this entire universe runs so perfectly without a controller?"

Upon hearing this they were utterly embarrassed and immediately accepted Islam at the hands of the Imām.

Someone once asked Imām Mālik to provide a proof of the existence of a Creator. The Imām indicated towards his face and observed that despite the face of man being so small, it consists of two eyes, a nose, two ears, a tongue, cheeks, lips and other parts. Notwithstanding this, no two persons' facial features are identical. Likewise the voice, mannerisms, character and habits of every person is unique. This is proof enough that all of this is the work of a Supreme Creator.

بَدِيعُ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۖ

(*He is*) *the Originator of the heavens and the earth.*

[Sūra al-Anʿām 101]

Until the dawn of the twentieth century, the prevailing view in the world of science was that “the universe has a constant nature and its existence is since infinity”. Modern research, however, has revealed that the universe, together with the dimensions of matter and time, in fact had a beginning, and came into existence as a result of a great explosion. This event, known as “The Big Bang” proved that the universe was created from nothingness as the result of the explosion of a single point. Modern scientists are in agreement that the Big Bang is the only rational and provable explanation of how the universe came into being. Before the Big Bang, there was no such thing as matter. From a condition of non-existence in which neither matter, nor energy, nor even time existed, and which can only be described metaphysically, matter, energy, and time were all created. This fact, only recently discovered by modern physics, was announced to us in the Qur’ān 1,400 years ago.

[Adapted from *The Creation of the Universe* by Harun Yahya.]

Abdul Ḥalīm Maḥmūd writes:

Imagine a house whose rooms are well provided with luxurious furniture, standing on a high mountain surrounded by a thick forest; suppose that a man came across this house, but could not find anybody nearby. Suppose that he thought that the rocks from the mountain had been scattered around, and then automatically collected together to take the shape of this splendid

palace with its bedrooms, chambers, corridors, and fittings, that the trees in the wood had split of their own accord into boards, and formed themselves into doors and beds, seats and tables, each taking its place in the palace; that the fibres from the plants and wool and hair of the animals of their own accord had changed into embroidered cloth, and then were cut into carpets, pillows, and cushions, and dispersed about the rooms and settled onto sofas and chairs; that lamps and chandeliers by themselves had fallen into this palace from all directions and fixed themselves into the ceilings, singly and in groups; would you not conclude that this must be a dream or a legend, or the reasoning of someone disturbed in his mind?

What, then, do you think of a palace whose ceiling is the sky, whose floor is the earth, whose pillars are the mountains, whose ornamentation is the plants, and whose lamps are the stars, moon, and sun? In the correct judgment of the intellect, can it be of lesser importance than this house? Is it not more likely to direct the attention and mind to a Shaping Creator, Alive, Self-Subsistent, Who created and shaped, and Who determined and guided?

And do you think that if a man brought millions of printing letters and began to move them around day after day, week after week, year after year, that he would obtain from them by chance, a composition which is a book of literature, philosophy, or mathematics?

As the Orientalist, David Santillana, said, even after moving them around for generations, after all his toil he would still be left with individual letters. If this

is so, as Santillana continues, how can we imagine that this universe, with the perfection and harmony between its individual parts and their amazing compatibility with each other, could ever have come about through random movement in a limitless void, as the materialists imagine? There is no doubt that rational people would agree with Aristotle that 'Every order bespeaks the intelligence behind it.'

The above manner of demonstration [that is, the cosmological proof] is the method which Kant, the greatest philosopher of Germany, declared to be the clearest and strongest proof of the existence of God.

[Abdul Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, *The Creed of Islam*.]

[7] Oneness or *Waḥdāniyya* is one of the attributes of Allah Taʿālā that negate any notion of plurality that could be ascribed Him, whether that plurality be in His essence, attributes, or actions. Allah Taʿāla is One in His Self, His Attributes and His Actions.

Oneness in His Self (*Dhāt*) refers to there being no other deity besides Him and His not being composed of parts. Oneness in His Attributes means that the likeness of His attributes cannot be found in any other being nor is any one of His attributes multiple. Oneness in His Actions indicates that none can act independently of Him nor does anyone share with Him in His actions.

ولا شيء مثله

There is nothing like Him.[9]

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[8] Allah Taʿālā has no partner in His Self. He also has no partner in His Names, Attributes and in His being worthy of worship. The Magians believed that there are two (or more) creators of the universe. The polytheists amongst the Arabs recognized Allah as the sole Creator but worshipped others alongside Him referring to them as 'gods.'

أَمِ ٱتَّخَذُواْ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ شُفَعَآءَ ۚ قُلْ أَوَلَوْ كَانُواْ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ شَيْـًٔا وَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ

Yet they take intercessors besides Allah! Say, 'Even though these have no power or understanding?'

[Sūra Al-Zumar 43]

He also has no partner in His Actions and acts independently of everything besides Him.

أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَـٰهٌ غَيْرُ ٱللَّهِ ۚ سُبْحَـٰنَ ٱللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

Do they really have another god besides Allah? Allah is far above anything they set alongside Him.

[Sūra al-Ṭūr 43]

[9] A likeness of something is that which can substitute it and resembles it in all aspects. The uniqueness of Allah Taʿālā discussed above rules out the possibility of there being any such being that can be said to be 'like' Allah.

ولا شىء يعجزه

There is nothing that can incapacitate Him.[10]

ولا إله غيره

There is no deity besides Him.[11]

Allah Taʿālā says:

لَيۡسَ كَمِثۡلِهِۦ شَيۡءٞۖ وَهُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلۡبَصِيرُ

"*And there is none like unto Him. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.*"

[Sūra Al-Shūrā 11]

This verse is unequivocally clear in its import and forms the basis of interpretation for all other verses of the Qurʾān and narrations of Ḥadīth that outwardly seem to suggest the notion of Allah's resemblance to the creation.

[10] Nothing can overpower Allah Taʿālā rendering him incapable of carrying out any possible (*mumkin*) event. Inability (ʿ*ajz*) is the antithesis of power (*qudra*), a quality that Allah Taʿālā possesses absolutely. The existence of everything besides Him is solely by His granting them existence. He created everything. It is not possible for a being that is powerless to create.

[11] The proof that the Qur'ān presents for there being no deity besides Allah is known in the terminology of ʿAqida as *Burhān al-Tamānuʿ* and is inferred from the following two verses:

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَآ ءَالِهَةٌ إِلَّا ٱللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا

"Had there been in the heavens and the earth deities besides Allah, then indeed the (entire system of the) heavens and the earth would have gone into disarray."

[Sūra al-Anbiyāʾ 22]

وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُۥ مِنْ إِلَـٰهٍ ۚ إِذًا لَّذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَـٰهٍۭ بِمَا خَلَقَ
وَلَعَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ

"Nor is there any other deity with Him, for then every deity would have taken his creation aside, and they would have indeed risen against each other."

[Sūra al-Muʾminūn 91]

It is evident that there is no disarray or disorder in the smooth operation of the heavens and the earth. This perfect system therefore establishes that there is no other deity besides Allah Taʿālā.

The Universe and its elements: all the galaxies, stars, planets, asteroids, the Milky Way, the sun, the earth, the moon and billions of other immense bodies revolve in marvellous harmony. If scrutinized in terms of cosmic, physical, mathematical and bio-chemical aspects the universe proves to be

قديم بلا ابتداء دائم بلا انتهاء

He is Eternal without a beginning[12] and Everlasting without an end[13].

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equipped, both on a micro level as well as a macro level, with the most suitable design for human life.

From the expansive rate of the universe to the location of earth in the solar system, from percentages of atmospheric gases to properties of sunlight, innumerable equilibriums are sustained each second and each hour. Not even one of these arrangements can occur by chance. All obey the infallible wisdom of Allah exhibiting His might and art.

لَا ٱلشَّمۡسُ يَنۢبَغِي لَهَآ أَن تُدۡرِكَ ٱلۡقَمَرَ وَلَا ٱلَّيۡلُ سَابِقُ ٱلنَّهَارِۚ
وَكُلّٞ فِي فَلَكٖ يَسۡبَحُونَ

It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night outstrip the Day. Each swims along in an orbit.

[Sūra Yāsīn 40]

[12] *Qidam* (timelessness or being eternal) is an attribute unique to Allah Taʿālā. It signifies 'His not being preceded by non-existence.' In other words: there is no beginning to His existence as He was always in existence. If Allah Taʿālā was not eternal it would mean that another being was required to bring Him into existence. This other being in turn would require another

لا يفنى ولا يبيد

He will never perish nor cease (to exist.)

ولاَ يكون إلا ما يريد

Nothing occurs except what He wills.[14]

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and this chain would have to infinitely continue (*Tasalsul*), which is impossible. The only other logical possibility is that the chain eventually terminates with one eternal being i.e. Allah.

[13] *Baqāʾ* (permanence) is an attribute of Allah Taʿālā defined as 'His not being followed by non-existence.' There is no end to Allah's existence.
Allah Taʿālā's attribute of *Qidam* (timelessness) negates the possibility of His being non-existent. The Qurʾān says:

هُوَ ٱلْأَوَّلُ وَٱلْآخِرُ

"*He is the First and the Last*"

[Sūra al-Ḥadīd 3]

[14] *Irāda* (Divine Will) is an attribute of Allah Taʿālā that relates to all possible things (*mumkināt*) with respect to specifying a possible occurrence for them. Specifying the occurrence of a certain possibility and not its opposite, at certain times and not others, despite the relation of all these possibilities and times to the *Dhāt* (Being) of Allah being the same, requires that there be an

لا تبلغه الأوهام ولا تدركه الأفهام

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attribute that carries out this function of determination. This attribute is known as *Irāda* (Divine Will.) If it was not for this attribute then all possible things (*mumkināt*) would have occurred all at once and in the same manner.

Whatever Allah Taʿālā wills occurs and everything that occurs is with the Will of Allah Taʿālā. This does not imply that the *Riḍā* (lit. pleasure) of Allah Taʿālā is associated with it. Neither does it imply that it is something that Allah Taʿālā has instructed his servants to do or carry out.

يَفۡعَلُ مَا يَشَآءُ

He (Allah) does what He wills

[Sūra āl-ʿImrān 40]

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَحۡكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ

Verily, Allah commands that which He wills.

[Sūra al-Māʾida 1]

إِنَّمَا قَوۡلُنَا لِشَيۡءٍ إِذَآ أَرَدۡنَٰهُ أَن نَّقُولَ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ

Verily! Our word unto a thing when we intend it is only that We say unto it: "Be!" and it is.

[Sūra al-Naḥl 40]

Imagination cannot conceive Him nor can intellect comprehend Him.[15]

ولا تشبهه الأنام

Nor do created beings resemble Him.[١٦]

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[15] Allah Taʿālā does not possess a form that He may be imagined or encompassed by human comprehension.

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِۦ عِلْمًا

He knows what is before and behind them, though they do not comprehend Him.

[Sūra Ṭāhā 110]

Whatever imagination or perception of Allah Taʿālā appears in the mind of a person is merely the whisperings (*waswasa*) of Shayṭān and Allah Taʿālā is nothing like that. Disliking the appearance of these thoughts is the sign of true faith (*Īmān.)*

[16] *Mukhālafa li l-Ḥawādith* (dissimilarity with created things) is amongst the attributes of Allah Taʿālā that express His transcendence over those elements that apply to temporal phenomena by virtue of their temporality. Allah Taʿālā is distinct from temporal things with relation to his *Dhāt* (Self), *Ṣifāt* (Attributes) and *Afʿāl* (Actions.)

His *Dhāt* is neither spacial nor corporeal. His Attributes are not temporal and His Actions are not motivated by need nor are they acquired.

حي لا يموت، قيوم لا ينام

(He is the) Ever-Living[17] who never dies and (the) All-Sustaining[18] who never sleeps[19].

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[17] *Ḥayāt (*Life) is one of the attributes of Allah Taʿālā and is a logical pre-requisite for the existence of all other attributes and their application. The Being that brought this entire perfectly systematic universe into existence and continually sustains it can only be a living being.

ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِى جَعَلَ لَكُمُ ٱلْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَٱلسَّمَآءَ بِنَآءً وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ
صُوَرَكُمْ وَرَزَقَكُم مِّنَ ٱلطَّيِّبَٰتِ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمُ ٱللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ ۖ فَتَبَارَكَ ٱللَّهُ رَبُّ
ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾ هُوَ ٱلْحَىُّ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَٱدْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ ٱلدِّينَ ۗ
ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ

It is Allah who has made for you the earth as a resting place, and the sky as a canopy, and has given you shape and made your shapes beautiful, and has provided for you Sustenance, of things pure and good; such is Allah your Lord. So Glory to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds! He is the Ever-Living, there is no deity besides Him.

[Sūra Ghāfir 64]

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى ٱلْحَيِّ ٱلَّذِى لَا يَمُوتُ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِهِۦ ۚ
وَكَفَىٰ بِهِۦ بِذُنُوبِ عِبَادِهِۦ خَبِيرًا

And put your trust (O Muhammad) in the Ever-Living one who dies not, and glorify his Praises, and Sufficient is He as the All-Knower of the sins of his slaves.

[Sūra al-Furqān 58]

18 *Qayyūm* is the stressed linguistic form of the Arabic word *Qāʾim.* It refers to one whose existence is by himself and not dependant on anything else. Rather, the existence and sustentation of everything else depends on him.

19 Sleep is a state of rest during which consciousness of the world is suspended due to the functional perception of the senses being diminished. Such an attribute of deficiency cannot be applied to Allah Taʿālā, who is free of all deficiencies. If sleep overcomes Allah it would negate His being *Qayyūm* as the entire operation of the universe depends on Him.

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُمْسِكُ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ أَن تَزُولَا ۚ وَلَئِن زَالَتَآ إِنْ أَمْسَكَهُمَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ
مِّنۢ بَعْدِهِۦٓ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا

It is Allah Who sustains the heavens and the earth, lest they cease (to function): and if they should fail, none can sustain them thereafter: verily He is Most Forbearing, Oft-Forgiving.

[Sūra Fāṭir 41]

خالق بلا حاجة ، رازق بلا مؤنة

He creates without any need[20] and sustains without any effort.[21]

مميت بلا مخافة ، باعث بلا مشقة

He causes death without any fear[22] and He raises to life without any difficulty[23].

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20 Need is a deficiency that requires fulfilment whereas Allah is totally independent.

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَغَنِىٌّ عَنِ ٱلْعَـٰلَمِينَ

Allah is free of all needs from all creation.

[Sūra al-ʿAnkabūt 6]

21 Whatever Allah Taʿālā wills occurs merely by His creating it. He needs no means or assistance to carry out His Will.

إِنَّمَا قَوْلُنَا لِشَىْءٍ إِذَآ أَرَدْنَـٰهُ أَن نَّقُولَ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ

Verily! Our word unto a thing when we intend it is only that We say unto it: "Be!" and it is.

[Sūra al-Naḥl 40]

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22 The creation's being in existence or not is one and the same to Allah, the All-Mighty. Causing death to the creation gives Him no fear.

23 Since Allah Taʿālā created everything in the universe from total nothingness without difficulty, there is no difficulty for Him in bringing them back to life. The Qurʾān indicates this in the following verses:

إِنَّمَا قَوْلُنَا لِشَيْءٍ إِذَآ أَرَدْنَـٰهُ أَن نَّقُولَ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ

Verily! Our word unto a thing when we intend it is only that We say unto it: "Be!" and it is.

[Sūra al-Naḥl 40]

وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِى يَبْدَؤُا۟ ٱلْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُۥ وَهُوَ أَهْوَنُ عَلَيْهِ ۚ وَلَهُ ٱلْمَثَلُ ٱلْأَعْلَىٰ فِى ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ وَهُوَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلْحَكِيمُ

It is He who begins (the process of) creation; then repeats it; and for Him it is most easy. To Him belongs the loftiest similitude (we can think of) in the heavens and the earth: for He is Exalted in Might, Full of Wisdom.

[Sūra al-Rūm 27]

أَفَعَيِينَا بِٱلْخَلْقِ ٱلْأَوَّلِ ۚ بَلْ هُمْ فِى لَبْسٍ مِّنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ

What, were We wearied by the first creation? No indeed; but they are in uncertainty as to the new creation.

ما زال بصفاته قديما قبل خلقه لم يزدد بكونهم شيئا لم يكن قبلهم من
صفته وكما كان بصفاته أزليا كذلك لا يزال عليها أبديا

[Sūra Qāf 15]

أَوَلَمۡ يَرَ ٱلۡإِنسَٰنُ أَنَّا خَلَقۡنَٰهُ مِن نُّطۡفَةٖ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٞ مُّبِينٞ ٧٧
وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلٗا وَنَسِيَ خَلۡقَهُۥۖ قَالَ مَن يُحۡيِ ٱلۡعِظَٰمَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٞ ٧٨
قُلۡ يُحۡيِيهَا ٱلَّذِيٓ أَنشَأَهَآ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٖۖ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلۡقٍ عَلِيمٌ

Does man not see that it is We Who created him from a sperm-drop? Yet behold he (stands forth) as an open adversary. And he makes comparisons for Us, and forgets his own (Origin and) Creation: he says, Who can give life to (dry) bones and decomposed ones (at that)? Say, He will give them life Who created them for the first time. For He is well versed in every kind of creation.

[Sūra Yāsīn 77-٧٩]

Need, effort, fear and difficulty are all facets of deficiency. Allah is free of all deficiencies.

He has always existed together with His attributes eternally since before His creation. The creation's coming into existence did not cause His attributes to increase in anything that was not there before them. As He was with His attributes Eternal so He will remain with those attributes forever.

ليس بعد خلق الخلق استفاد اسم الخالق ولا بإحداثه البرية استفاد اسم البارىء له معنى الربوبية ولا مربوب ومعنى الخالقية ولا مخلوق

He did not acquire the name of 'Creator' after creating the creation nor by bringing them into origin did he acquire the name 'Originator.' His was the quality of Sustention even when there was nothing to be sustained and the quality of being Creator even when there was no creation.

وكما أنه محيي الموتى بعدما أحياهم استحق هذا الاسم قبل إحيائهم كذلك استحق اسم الخالق قبل إنشائهم

Like how He was the 'Giver of life' to the dead after He brought them to life, He deserved this name even before bringing them to life.

Similarly He deserved the name 'Creator' even before creating them[24].

[24] Allah Taʿālā, with all His beautiful names and sublime attributes is eternal. This includes both the *Ṣifāt al-Dhāt* (personal attributes e.g. life, knowledge etc.) as well as the *Ṣifāt al-Afʿāl* (attributes of actions e.g. creating, giving life etc.)

These attributes of Allah exist with the Being of Allah eternally. The proof of Allah's possessing these attributes is from the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth as well as reason.

ٱللَّهُ لَآ إِلَـٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ٱلۡحَىُّ ٱلۡقَيُّومُ‌ۚ

Allah, there is no god but He, the Living, the Self-subsisting, Eternal.

[Sūra Al-Baqarah 255]

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ ٱلرَّزَّاقُ ذُو ٱلۡقُوَّةِ ٱلۡمَتِينُ

Allah is He who gives (all) Sustenance, Lord of power, Steadfast (forever).

[Sūra al-Dhāriyāt 58]

Logically it is obvious that the Being who created the entire universe in its perfect and systematic structure most definitely possessed attributes of life, knowledge, power, will, hearing and sight. These attributes are known as *Ṣifāt al-Dhāt* (Personal Attributes.)

ذلك بأنه على كل شىء قدير ، وكل شىء إليه فقير ، وكل أمر عليه يسير ، لا يحتاج إلى شىء ﴿ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِۦ شَىْءٌ ۖ وَهُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْبَصِيرُ ﴾

Likewise Allah Taʿālā possessed the qualities of creating, giving life, giving death, nourishing and sustaining since eternity. These are known as *Ṣifāt al-Afʿāl* (the attributes of actions) and is termed *Takwīn* (Origination).

According to the Māturīdiyya *Takwīn* is one of the eternal attributes of Allah Taʿālā that gives rise to occurrence of things at the time and in the manner Allah Taʿālā willed them to occur. In may be expressed as Allah's timeless actualisation of things that manifest temporally.

The Ashāʿira, on the other hand, do not consider *Takwīn* as an additional attribute of Allah Taʿālā and define Allah's actions to be the temporal manifestation of His attributes of Power (*Qudra*) and Will (*Irāda*.)

The difference is, thus, one of semantics. If we choose to define "action" in terms of the temporal manifestation, we say that Allah's actions are temporal and we need not ascribe an extra attribute to Him. If we choose to define "action" in terms of the timeless aspect, then we declare Allah's actions to be timeless and ascribe an extra attribute to Allah (*Takwīn*) to cover this timeless meaning.

That is because He has full power over everything, everything is in need of Him, every matter is easy for Him and He is not in need of anything. "*There is nothing like Him and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.*"

خلق الخلق بعلمه وقدر لهم أقدارا وضرب لهم آجالا

He created the creation with His knowledge, determined destinies for them[25] and fixed for them life spans.[26]

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[25] Everything that occurs in the universe is by the pre-determination of Allah Taʿālā. The destinies of man have already been fixed by Him. Their sustenance, course of life and actions have all been pre-determined. Every person will only receive the sustenance that has been destined for him – be it permissible or impermissible in the *Sharīʿa*.

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ

Surely We have created everything in measure.

[Sūra Al-Qamar 49]

[26] The lifespan of man is fixed. No person can advance or delay his time of death even for a moment.

فَإِذَا جَآءَ أَجَلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً ۖ وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ

و لم يخف عليه شيء من أفعالهم قبل أن خلقهم
وعلم ما هم عاملون قبل أن يخلقهم

Nothing of their actions was hidden from Him before He created them, and He knew everything that they would do before creating them.[27]

When their term is reached, not an hour can they cause delay, nor (an hour) can they advance (it in anticipation).

[Sūra al-Aʿrāf 34]

This applies both to the one who dies of natural causes as well as one who is killed by someone. In other words, the person that is killed has also died at his appointed predestined time and it cannot be said that his life span has been cut short by being killed.

[27] *'Ilm* (Knowledge) is an eternal attribute of Allah Taʿālā linked to things known making them manifest be they necessary (*wājibāt*), possible (*mumkināt*) or impossible (*mustaḥīlāt*.)

This meaning relates to the necessary (*wajibāt*), because Allah has knowledge of Himself and of His own attributes. It relates to the possible (*mumkināt*), because Allah knows everything in His Creation. It relates to the impossible (*mustaḥīlāt*), because Allah knows that things like His having a partner are impossible.

وأمرهم بطاعته ونهاهم عن معصيته

He enjoined on them His obedience and prohibited them from His disobedience.[28]

Nothing, not even the smallest atom is hidden from Allah Taʿālā. His Knowledge encompasses each and everything and all its attributes.

Since Allah's Knowledge, being His attribute, is eternal it follows that Allah was aware of all things even before their existence.

[28] Everything's being predestined does not imply that man has no capacity to exercise his choice in fulfilling the orders of Allah and avoiding His prohibitions. Man is unlike stones, trees and other lifeless objects that are completely powerless and have no choice or will. The movement or stillness of these objects is not by their choice. The movement or stillness of man is obviously different. Man can move or remain still as he chooses.

The purpose of man's creation was that he may be commanded to worship Allah and serve Him by obeying His commands and abstaining from His prohibitions. Allah Taʿālā says:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ ٱلْجِنَّ وَٱلْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

I have only created Jinn and man, that they may serve Me.

[Sūra al-Dhāriyāt 56]

وكل شيء يجري بتقديره ، ومشيئته ، ومشيئته تنفذ لا مشيئة للعباد
إلا ما شاء لهم ، فما شاء لهم كان ، وما لم يشأ لم يكن

Everything occurs by His Decree and Will[29]. His Will is accomplished. The slaves have no will except what He has willed for them. What He

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Man's life is a trial and therefore there are certain commands and prohibitions that apply to him. Fulfilment of the commands makes him deserving of Allah's mercy and reward. Violation of the prohibitions renders him liable for punishment.

[29] Everything that occurs in the universe (be it good or evil) is by the Will of Allah Taʿālā. The actions of man are all by the creation and Will of Allah Taʿālā.

وَٱللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

Allah has created you and your handiwork.

[Sūra al-Ṣāffāt 96]

Bukhāri and Muslim narrate the well-known ḥadīth narrated by ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ wherein it is mentioned that the Archangel Jibrīl ﵇ came to the Prophet ﷺ in the form of a man and asked him questions relating to the religion. When asked about *Īmān* (faith) the Prophet ﷺ said (amongst other things):

و تؤمن بالقدر خيره و شره

"(Part of faith is that) you affirm the Decree, the good of it and the bad of it."

has willed for them occurs and what He has not willed does not occur.[30]

[Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim]

The Qurʾān also tells us:

قُلْ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ

Say: All things are from Allah

[Sūra al-Nisāʾ 78]

[30] Everything, including the will of the creation, is subservient to the Will of Allah Taʿālā. Nothing can occur without His Will.

وَمَا تَشَآءُونَ إِلَّآ أَن يَشَآءَ ٱللَّهُ رَبُّ ٱلْعَـٰلَمِينَ

But you shall not will except as Allah wills, the Cherisher of the Worlds.

[Sūra al-Takwīr 29]

It is impossible for the will of anyone besides Allah to be accomplished in opposition to the Will of Allah Taʿālā. If this was possible it would imply the inability of Allah Taʿālā which would in turn negate His divinity since it is not possible that the Divine Being is unable to accomplish something.

يهدي من يشاء ، ويعصم ويعافي فضلا ، ويضل من يشاء
ويخذل ويبتلي عدلا

He guides whomsoever He wills, and protects and grants safety (to them) out of (His) Grace; and He leads astray whomsoever He wills, and forsakes and tries (them) out of (His) Justice.

وكلهم يتقلبون في مشيئته بين فضله وعدله

All of them waver in His Will between His Grace and His Justice[31].

[31] The entire universe belongs to Allah Taʿālā. As 'Owner' of the entire creation He possesses the full unreserved right to do with them as He Wills. It is not the right of the creation upon Allah that He does only that which is best for them. The Qurʾān says:

وَيَفۡعَلُ ٱللَّهُ مَا يَشَآءُ

Allah does what He wills

[Sūra Ibrāhīm 2v]

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَحۡكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ

Allah decrees whatsoever He wills

[Sūra al-Māʾida 1]

وهو متعال عن الأضداد والأنداد

He is above having opponents or rivals.

لا راد لقضائه ، ولا معقب لحكمه ، ولا غالب لأمره

There is none that can ward off His decree. There is none that can set back His command. There is none that can overpower His affair.

If it was necessary for Allah to always do that which is best for creation no person would have committed disbelief or disobedience and be caused to enter *Jahannam* as this certainly cannot be said to be best for him.

Thus for whomsoever Allah has willed faith (*Īmān*) it is on account of His Grace and for whomsoever He has willed disbelief (*kufr*) it is through His Justice. Injustice is to interfere in the possession of another – whereas the entire creation is possessed by Allah alone.

يُضِلُّ ٱللَّهُ مَن يَشَآءُ وَيَهۡدِي مَن يَشَآءُۚ

Allah leads astray whom He wills, and guides whom He wills.

[Sūra al-Muddaththir 31]

ءامنا بذلك كله ، وأيقنا أن كلا من عنده

We believe in all of that and we are certain that everything is from Him.

* * * * *

وأن محمدا صلى الله عليهِ وسلم عبده المصطفى ، ونبيه المجتبى ، ورسوله المرتضى ،

And (we say)[32] that Muḥammad[33], may Allah bless him and grant him peace, is His chosen Slave[34], His elected Prophet, and His selected Messenger.[35]

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[32] After having completed the explanation of the aspects of faith relating to the Oneness of Allah Ta`ala and His attributes, the author begins the discussion of Prophethood (*Nubuwwa*) so as to complete the two fundamentals of faith viz. *Tawḥīd* and *Risāla*.

[33] This is the most famous of his noble names, which number one thousand or three hundred or ninety nine according to various opinions. The name *Muḥammad* means 'one who is praised excessively.' This name was given to him by his grandfather ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib on the seventh day after his birth by inspiration from Allah Taʿālā.

The Prophet ﷺ is recorded as having said:

إن لي أسماء أنا محمد ، وأنا أحمد ، وأنا الماحي ، يمحو الله بي الكفر، وأنا الحاشر، الذي يحشر النَّاس عَلَى قدمي وأنا العاقب، والعاقب الذي ليس بعده نبي

I have many names, I am Muḥammad, I am Aḥmad, I am al-Māḥī (The Eraser) by whom Allah erases blasphemy, I am al-Ḥāshir (the Gatherer) behind whom people will be assembled, and I am al-ʿĀqib (the last of all prophets)

[Bukhari]

[34] Slavery or Servitude of Allah Taʿālā is an attribute of esteem. It is one of the most beloved titles in the sight of Allah and Allah Taʿālā has used it in the Noble Qurʾān to refer to The Prophet ﷺ in numerous verses.

For instance when relating the incident of the *Isrāʾ* (the Prophet's ﷺ miraculous night-journey to Jerusalem before his ascension to the heavens) the Qurʾān says:

سُبْحَـٰنَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِۦ لَيْلًا مِّنَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ إِلَى ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْأَقْصَا ٱلَّذِى بَـٰرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُۥ لِنُرِيَهُۥ مِنْ ءَايَـٰتِنَآ

Glory be to Him, who carried His servant by night from the Holy Mosque to the Further Mosque the precincts of which We have blessed, that We might show him some of Our signs.

[Sūra al-Isrāʾ 1]

The attribute of being a slave of Allah makes clear the distinction between the status of the Creator and the created. The attribute of being Sustainer (*Rabb*) and Divine (*Ilāh*) is solely that of Allah Taʿālā. The Prophet ﷺ, despite his lofty and elevated rank, possesses the attribute of slavery to the Divine Sustainer.

Neverthless, at times Allah Taʿālā grants to some of his slaves the ability to demonstrate extraordinary feats like bringing the dead to life, curing the blind etc. but the distinction between the slave and the master must be always clearly maintained. The Christians fell into error by blurring this distinction when they raised the Prophet ʿĪsā (Jesus) ؑ to the rank of divinity after witnessing such marvellous events at his hands. The author chose to use the attribute of 'slave' for The Prophet ﷺ to emphasize this distinction.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

لا تطروني كما أطرت النَّصارَى ابن مريم ، إنما أنا عبدٌ ، فقولوا عبد الله ورسوله

Do not exaggerate my praise as the Christians did for Jesus, son of Mary. I am but a slave. So call me the slave of Allah and His Messenger.

[Bukhārī]

[35] The scholars have defined *Nabī* (Prophet) and *Rasūl* (Messenger) differently. According to Shihāb ibn Ḥajar: A *Nabī* is a free, male, human-being who receives revelation of a divine law although he may not be

وأنه خاتم الأنبياء ، وإمام الأتقياء ، وسيد المرسلين ،

وحبيب رب العالمين

And that he is the Seal of the Prophets[36], the Leader of the Pious[37], the Chief of the Messengers[38] and the Beloved of the Lord of the Worlds[39].

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instructed to convey it, whilst a *Rasūl* is a free, male, human-being who receives revelation of a divine law and is instructed to convey it to others - whether he possesses a book that was revealed to him (or anyone before him) or not.

Hence the term *Rasūl* is more specific than *Nabī* and the principal distinction between the two is with regards to having received the instruction of conveying the message or not.

[36] The Qurʾān states:

مَّا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَآ أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَٰكِن رَّسُولَ ٱللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ ٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ

Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets.

[Sūra al-Aḥzāb 40]

The Prophet ﷺ said:

وكل دعوة نبوة بعد نبوته فغي وهوى

وإنه سيكون من أمتي كذابون ثلاثون ، كلهم يزعم أنه نبي
وأنا خاتم النبيين لا نبي بعدي

There will be thirty impostors in my community. Each one will claim that he is a prophet - whereas I am the seal of the prophets. There is no prophet after me.

[Muslim]

37 Piety (Taqwā) refers to the guarding of oneself from disbelief and all forms of disobedience to Allah. The Prophet ﷺ, being the leader of this Umma (community) and of all the previous prophets, is given the title "Leader of the Pious."

38 In a ḥadīth the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

أنا سيد ولد آدم يوم القيامة

I will be the leader of the children of Adam on the Day of Judgement.

[Muslim]

39 The Prophet ﷺ said:

أنا حبيب الله

I am the beloved of Allah.

[Tirmidhī, Dārimī]

Every claim to Prophethood after Him is falsehood and pretence[40].

وهو المبعوث إلى عامة الجن وكافة الورى بالحق والهدى

وبالنور والضياء

He is the one who has been sent to all of jinn and mankind[41] with truth and guidance and with light and illumination[42].

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[40] Since it is established that the Prophet ﷺ is the final prophet any person who claims prophethood is in express denial of definitive textual evidence as contained in the verse of Sūra al-Aḥzāb quoted above. Such denial can be nothing but deviation and falsehood.

[41] Consider for instance the verse:

قُلْ يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ إِنِّى رَسُولُ ٱللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا

Say: 'O mankind, I am the Messenger of Allah to you all'.

[Sūra al-Aʿrāf 158]

Also see Sūra al-Jinn verses 1 to 13.

[42] Truth signifies the purpose of creation of the heavens and the earth, which is to indicate to the Oneness of its Creator, Allah Ta`ala, and for the creation

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وإن القرءان كلام الله ، منه بدا بلا كيفية قولا ، وأنزله على رسوله وحيا ، وصدقه المؤمنون على ذلك حقا ، وأيقنوا أنه كلام الله تعالى بالحقيقـــة ليس بمخلوق ككلام البرية ، فمن سمعه فزعم أنه كلام البشر فقد كفـــر، وقد ذمه الله وعابه وأوعده بسقر حيث قال تعالى﴿ سَأُصْلِيهِ سَقَرَ ﴾ فلمـــا

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to serve Him. Guidance denotes the course of action that enables one to reach truth. Light and illumination refer to the Divine law and religion supported with clear evidences.

وَكَذَٰلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا ۚ مَا كُنتَ تَدْرِى مَا ٱلْكِتَـٰبُ
وَلَا ٱلْإِيمَـٰنُ وَلَـٰكِن جَعَلْنَـٰهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِى بِهِۦ مَن نَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ۚ
وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِىٓ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

And thus did We reveal to you an inspired book by Our command. You did not know what the Book was, nor (what) the faith (was), but We made it a light, guiding thereby whom We please of Our servants; and most surely you show the way to the right path.

[Sūra al-Shūrā 52]

أوعد الله بسقر لمن قال ﴿ إِنْ هَـٰذَآ إِلَّا قَوْلُ ٱلْبَشَرِ ﴾ علمنا وأيقنا أنه قـــول خالق البشر، ولا يشبه قول البشر

(And we say) that the Qurʾān is the word of Allāh. It came from Him as speech without (our comprehending its) form[43]. He sent it down on His Messenger as revelation. The believers believed him and testified to that, as absolute truth[44]. They are certain that it is the word

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43 The Qurʾān is the Speech of Allah Taʿālā by which Allah Taʿālā commands, prohibits, informs and relates incidents. Speech (*Kalām*) is an eternal attribute of Allah Taʿālā. If Allah Taʿālā did not possess the attribute of speech it would mean that He is mute and hence imperfect. Imperfection and defects cannot be attributed to Allah.

The actual speech of Allah, being His attribute, is also eternal and timeless like all His other attributes. It is without letter or sound. This is known as *al-Kalām al-Nafsī.*

The words and letters of the Qurʾān that are written in the muṣḥaf and that are recited is known as *al-Kalām al-Lafẓī* and is indicative of the actual speech of Allah (*al-Kalām al-Nafsī.*) It is as if *al-Kalām al-Lafẓī* is the outer shell or cover, whilst *al-Kalām al-Nafsī* is its core.

44 The companions of the Prophet ﷺ witnessed the revelation of the Qurʾān upon the Prophet ﷺ and were certain of its inimitability (*Iʿjāz*) and its being from Allah Taʿālā. On the other hand the disbelievers rejected its being from

of Allah in reality and it is not created, as is the speech of created beings[45]. Whoever listens to it and asserts that it is the speech of man has committed disbelief and Allah has reproached and criticized him and threatened him with his punishment when He, Most High said, '*I will enter him into the Blazing Fire*.' Since Allah threatened with the blazing fire those[46] who say '*This is not but the speech of man'* we know with certainty that it is the speech of the Creator of man and that the speech of man does not resemble it.

ومن وصف الله بمعنى من معاني البشر فقد كفر، فمن أبصر هذا اعتبر ،
وعن مثل قول الكفار انزجر، وعلم أنه بصفاته ليس كالبشر

Allah and falsely asserted its being the invention of the Prophet ﷺ.This is outright *kufr.*

[45] Some deviant groups, like the Muʿtazila and Karrāmiyya, likened the Qurʾān to the speech of man by claiming that it was created rather than being eternal and that it consisted of sounds and letters. This false belief spread in the times of some of the Abbasid caliphs who had adopted this opinion and put many of the ʿUlamā, like Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, to great trial on account of upholding the view of the *Ahl al-Sunna*.

[46] The *Munāfiqūn* (hypocrites) asserted that the Qurʾān was a forgery, being the words of the Prophet ﷺ and not a revelation from Allah.

Anyone who describes Allah with any of the characteristics of human beings has committed disbelief. Whoever sees this takes lesson and refrains from statements similar to that of the disbelievers, and knows that Allah together with His attributes, is unlike man.

* * * * *

والرؤية حق لأهل الجنة ، بغير إحاطة ولا كيفية ، كما نطق به كتاب ربّنا ﴿ وُجُوهٌ يَوۡمَئِذٍ نَّاضِرَةٌ ۝ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ ﴾ وتفسيره على ما أراده الله تعالى وعلمه ، وكل ما جاء في ذلك من الحديث الصحيح عن الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم فهو كما قال ومعناه على ما أراد ، لا ندخل في ذلك متأوّلين بآرائنا ولا متوهّمين بأهوائنا ، فإنه ما سلم في دينه إلا من سلم لله عز وجل ولرسوله صلى الله عليه وسلم ورد علم ما اشتبه عليه إلى عالمه

The Vision (of Allah) by the people of paradise is true, without (their vision being) encompassing and without (the) manner (of their vision being known.) As the Book of our Lord as expressed: "*Faces on that Day will be radiant, looking at their Lord.*" The explanation of this is as Allah wills and knows. Every authentic report that has come down to us about this from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Companions (May Allah be pleased with them) is as he said and its meaning is according to what He intended. We do not delve into that interpreting

it according to our opinions or imagining it according to our desires. For indeed no one is safe in his religion except he who submits (himself) to Allah, the Exalted and Glorified and to His Messenger ﷺ and entrusts the knowledge of that which he finds unclear to the one who has knowledge of it.[47]

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[47] The Vision (*Ruʾya*) of Allah Taʿālā is in itself a possible occurrence. However this vision will not be in the manner that vision of physical objects takes place in this world. In the world it is necessary that the object being viewed be a light-reflecting object, in a specific direction and within a certain range from the viewer. Allah Taʿālā does not possess a physical body or form. Hence this mode of vision cannot apply to Him. The vision of Allah Taʿālā will be in some other way, the details of which are unknown to us. Not knowing the manner of this vision does not oblige us to reject it. Instead we affirm it and assign the full explanation of it to Allah Taʿālā.

The Muʿtazila and other sects, like the Jahmiyya, held that Allah cannot be seen at all, even on the Day of Resurrection. They rejected the sound narrations of ḥadīth to the contrary, claiming that vision necessitates corporeality and direction, which are precluded for Allah, Most High. In contrast, the *Ahl al-Sunna* hold that Allah will most certainly be seen by the believers without our specifying how. This is based on the verse:

وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاضِرَةٌ ۝ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ

Faces on that Day will be radiant, looking at their Lord

[Sūra al-Qiyāma 22-23]

In a ḥadīth it is narrated:

إنكم سترون ربكم كما ترون هذا القمر

Indeed you will see your Lord just as you see the moon.

[Bukhārī]

In another ḥadīth the following is recorded:

عن صهيب رضي الله عنه قال تلا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم هذه الآية ﴿ لِّلَّذِينَ أَحۡسَنُواْ ٱلۡحُسۡنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٞۖ ﴾ وقال إذا دخل أهل الجنة الجنة وأهل النار النار نادى مناد يا أهل الْجنة إن لكم عند الله موعدا يريد أن ينجزكموه فيقولون وما هو ألم يثقل الله موازيننا ويبيض وجوهنا ويدخلنا الجنة وينجنا من النار قال فيكشف الحجاب فينظرون إليه فوالله ما أعطاهم الله شيئا أحب إليهم من النظر يعني إليه ولا أقر لأعينهم

Ṣuhayb ﷺ reports: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited the verse "For those who do good is the best (reward) and more (thereto)" and then said: When the people of Paradise will enter Paradise and the people of Hell will enter Hell, a caller will announce 'O People of Paradise! Your Lord wishes to fulfil His promise to you.' They will reply 'What can that be? Did He not make our scales weighty! Did He not brighten our faces! Did He not enter us into Paradise and save us from the Fire!' The Prophet ﷺ continued: Allah will then remove the veil and they will see him. By Allah! He will not give them anything more dear to them than His vision and there would be nothing more cool to their eyes.

[Musnad Aḥmad]

ولا تثبت قدم في الإسلام إلا على ظهر التسليم والاستسلام ، فمن رام علم ما حظر عنه علمه ، و لم يقنع بالتسليم فهمه ، حجبه مرامه عن خالص التوحيد ، وصافي المعرفة ، وصحيح الإيمان ، فيتذبذب بين الكفر والإيمان والتصديق والتكذيب ، والإقرار والإنكار ، موسوسا تائها شاكا ، لا مؤمنا مصدقا ، ولا جاحدا مكذبا

The foot of Islam cannot be firm except on the back of submission and surrender. Whoever aims to gain the knowledge of that which is beyond his capacity to know, and his intellect is not content with submission, (will find that) his aim will veil him from pure belief in Allah's unity (*Tawḥīd*), clear recognition (*Maʿrifa*) and true faith (*Īmān*.) He will then waver between disbelief and belief, confirmation and rejection and acceptance and denial. He will be subjected to insinuations and find himself wandering, confused and full of doubt, being neither an accepting believer nor a denying rejecter.

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ولا يصح الإيمان بالرؤية لأهل دار السلام لمن اعتبرها منهم بوهم أو تأولها
بفهم إذ كان تأويل الرؤية وتأويل كل معنى يضاف إلى الربوبية
بترك التأويل ولزوم التسليم ، وعليه دين المسلمين

Belief in the vision of Allah by the people of the 'Abode of Peace' is not correct if a person imagines what it is like, or interprets it according to his own understanding since the interpretation of the vision or of any of the attributes related to Lordship, is by abandoning interpretation and adhering to submission. Upon this is the religion of the Muslims.

ومن لم يتوق النفي والتشبيه زل و لم يصب التنزيه فإن ربنا جل وعلا
موصوف بصفات الوحدانية ، منعوت بنعوت الفردانية ،
ليس في معناه أحد من البرية

Anyone who does not refrain from negating (the attributes of Allah) or likening (Allah to the creation[48]), has gone astray and has failed to

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[48] *Taʿṭīl* (Negating the attributes of Allah) and *Tashbīh* (Resembling Allah to the creation) are both extremes which Imām Ṭaḥāwī wishes to reject. The Muʿtazila sect negated the vision of Allah Taʿālā on the assumption that they were maintaining His transcendence. Since Allah is unlike created things they averred that He cannot be seen as being seen is the attribute of physical objects.

understand Allah's Transcendence. This is because our Lord, the Glorified and the Exalted, is described with the attribute of Oneness and Absolute Uniqueness and none of the creation is in any way like Him.

وتعالى عن الحدود والغايات والأركان والأعضاء والأدوات ، لا تحويه الجهات الست كسائر المبتدعات

He is beyond having boundaries, limits, parts or limbs[49]. The six directions do not contain Him like (they contain) all created things[50].

The Mujassima sect (Anthropomorphists), on the other extreme, affirmed vision of Allah Taʿālā in the same manner as physical objects are seen.

[49] Allah Taʿālā is free of having limits and boundaries as these only apply to bodies that are confined and limited by space. Allah Taʿālā is not a physical entity and these things do not apply to Him. Similarly the Self (*Dhāt*) of Allah is not made up of parts and limbs as these entail His being a physical body and negates Oneness in His self.

Those verses of the Qurʾān and narrations of ḥadīth that apparently seem to suggest limbs for Allah Taʿālā cannot be therefore understood literally. Rather, these verses and narrations must be confirmed, just as they are, and their meanings are to be assigned to the Knowledge of Allah Taʿālā without

additions, subtractions, or substituting meanings imagined to be synonyms, whilst acknowledging Allah's absolute transcendence beyond the characteristics of created things. This approach is consistent with the Qurʾānic verse "*There is nothing whatsoever like unto him*" [Qurʾān 42:11] and was the way of the *Salaf* (earlier scholars.)

Latter scholars (*Khalaf*) were compelled by circumstance to resort to figurative interpretation (*Taʾwīl*) that preserved the divine transcendence and was within the parameters of classical Arabic usage without claiming that the interpretation suggested is the intended meaning with certainty.

Both these approaches have been accepted amongst the *Ahl al-Sunna* as mentioned by Imām al-Nawawī in his famous commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and other scholars.

For example, in the words of the Qurʾān "يد الله" (the literal English translation of which is "the hand of Allah") the Earlier scholars' (*Salaf's*) approach was to confirm and believe in it without knowing its meaning. Instead they consigned the knowledge of what is meant to Allah. This is called *Tafwīḍ.* The Latter scholars (*Khalaf*) interpreted 'hand' to refer, for example, to the assistance or power of Allah. This is called figurative interpretation (*Taʾwīl.*)

[50] Directions do not apply to Allah Taʿālā since direction was created by Him. He is just as He was before creating direction, space and time.

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والمعراج حق ، وقد أسري بالنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وعرج بشخصه في اليقظة إلى السماء ثم إلى حيث شاء الله من العلى ، وأكرمه الله بما شاء ،

قد كان موجودا و لا مكانا   و حكمه الآن على ما كان

He was existent when there was no space
He is now just as He was then

In eternity, Allah was not in any direction nor place since these did not exist. If He assumed a direction after creating it then this implies a variation from the condition He was in. Variation in the Self *(Dhāt*) of Allah Taʿālā is not possible as it implies temporality.

Allah Taʿālā is *Al-Ghanī* i.e. The Independent. He is not in need of space and time. Claiming that Allah exists in a specific direction or place implies that He is in need of that space or direction.

Likewise belief in the literal meaning of the common statement "Allah is everywhere" is equally false because 'everywhere' is the sum total of all space, expressed in Arabic as في كل مكان whereas Allah Taʿālā is free of space. The statement that "Allah is everywhere" is not found in any of the classical ʿAqīda references of the *Ahl al-Sunna.*

وأوحى إليه ما أوحى ، ﴿ مَا كَذَبَ ٱلۡفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰٓ ﴾ فصلى الله عليه وسلم في الآخرة والأولى

The *Miʿrāj* (Ascent to the heavens) is true. The Prophet ﷺ was taken by night and made to ascend in person, in a wakeful state, to the heavens and from there to whatever heights Allah willed for him. Allah ennobled him in the way that He wished and revealed to him what He revealed to him. *"The heart was not mistaken about what it saw."* May Allah bless him and grant him peace in this world and the next[51].

[51] The Prophet ﷺ was taken at night from *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām* (the Sacred Mosque) in Makkah al-Mukarramah to *al-Masjid al-Aqṣā* (the Farthest Mosque) in Jerusalem and from there he was physically taken up to the heavens in a wakeful state. This ascension was not merely spiritual nor was it a dream. If it was a mere spiritual experience or a dream the disbelievers of Makkah would not have denied it so vehemently as they did when the Prophet ﷺ informed them of this journey.

Isrāʾ refers to the earthly journey from *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām* to *al-Masjid al-Aqṣā*. A journey that would normally take two months was miraculously undertaken by the Prophet ﷺ in a brief instant. This journey is established from the Qurʾān:

والحوضُ الذي أكرمَه الله تعالى بهِ غياثًا لأمّته حقٌّ

سُبۡحَـٰنَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَسۡرَىٰ بِعَبۡدِهِۦ لَيۡلاً مِّنَ ٱلۡمَسۡجِدِ ٱلۡحَرَامِ إِلَى ٱلۡمَسۡجِدِ
ٱلۡأَقۡصَا ٱلَّذِى بَـٰرَكۡنَا حَوۡلَهُۥ لِنُرِيَهُۥ مِنۡ ءَايَـٰتِنَآ‌ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلۡبَصِيرُ

Pure is the Being (Allah) who did take his servant for a journey by night from the sacred mosque to the farthest mosque, whose precincts we did bless, in order that we might show him some of our Signs: for He is the one who hears and sees (all things).

[Sūra al-Isrāʾ 1]

Miʿrāj refers to the journey from *Bayt al-Maqdis* (Jerusalem) to the heavens. This is confirmed by numerous *aḥādīth* (narrations) detailing the miraculous incident of the *Miʿrāj*. For instance, in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri, a detailed ḥadīth is narrated by the companion, Mālik ibn Ṣaʿṣa a, wherein the Prophet ﷺ related the events of night of his ascension to the heavens, in which he proceeded from the first to the seventh heaven meeting various Prophets.

The renowned Qurʾanic exegete ʿAllāmah Ibn Kathīr (*raḥimahullāh*) has recorded the incident of Miʿrāj from various companions in his Tafsīr and cites Ḥāfiẓ Abu al-Khaṭṭāb who states that the traditions in this regard are mass-transmitted by twenty five companions of the Prophet ﷺ.

The *Ḥawḍ* (Pool) which Allah has honoured the him (the Prophet ﷺ) with to quench the thirst of his community on the day of judgement, is true[52].

[52] This is established in *aḥādīth* that collectively reach the level of being *mutawātir* (mass-transmitted) in meaning. The great scholar of ḥadīth Baqiyy ibn Mukhallad compiled an entire booklet in which he gathered these *aḥādīth*. The total number of *aḥādīth* together with the addendum by Ibn Bashkuwāl amount to ninety nine. Ibn Kathīr also collected all these *aḥādīth* towards the end of his voluminous work on history *Al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya.*

The Prophet ﷺ said:

أنا فرطكم على الحوض أنتظركم ليرفع لي رجال منكم حتى إذا عرفتهم اختلجوا دوني فأقول رب أصحابي رب أصحابي فيقال إنك لا تدري ما أحدثوا بعدك

I am your predecessor at the *Ḥawḍ* (Pool.) Some of you will be brought in front of me so that I will see them and then they will be taken away from me and I will say, 'O Lord, my companions!' It will be said, 'You do not know what they did after you had left.

[Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī]

He ﷺ also said:

والشفاعةُ التي ادَّخرها لهم حقٌّ، كما رُوي في الأخبارِ

The intercession (*Shafāʿa*) that Allah Taʿālā has stored up for them (i.e. the *Umma*) is true, as related in the narrations.[53]

حوضي مسيرة شهر و زواياه سواء و ماؤه أبيض من اللبن و ريحه أطيب من المسك و كيزانه كنجوم السماء من يشرب منه فلا يظمأ أبدا

My *Ḥawḍ* (Pool) is (so large that it takes) a month's journey (to cross it.) Its water is whiter than milk, and its fragrance is more pleasant than musk and its drinking cups are (as numerous) as the (number of) stars of the sky. Whoever drinks from it, will never be thirsty again.

[Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri]

[53] The Prophet ﷺ said:

لكل نبي دعوة مستجابة يدعو بها وأريد أن أختبئ دعوتي شفاعة لأمتي في الآخرة

Every prophet was granted an accepted prayer and I wish to reserve mine as intercession for my community (*Umma*) in the hereafter.

[Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri]

Shafāʿa (Intercession) is of various types. The 'Supreme Intercession' is that which the Prophet ﷺ will make for the entire creation on the day of judgement for Allah Taʿālā to commence with the reckoning after the creation will be in immense difficulty. This intercession is especially reserved

for the Prophet ﷺ and is *Al-Maqām al-Maḥmūd* (the Station of Praise and Glory) referred to in the ayah:

وَمِنَ ٱلَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِۦ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ عَسَىٰٓ أَن يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا

Keep vigil during a part of the night (i.e. pray Tahajjud), an additional prayer for you (O Muḥammad.) Soon your Lord will exalt you to a station of praise and glory.

[Sura al-Isrāʾ 79]

ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar ؓ narrates the following ḥadīth:

إن الناس يصيرون يوم القيامة جثا كل أمة تتبع نبيها يقولون يا فلان اشفع يا فلان اشفع حتى تنتهي الشفاعة إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فذلك يوم يبعثه الله المقـــام المحمود

On the day of resurrection people will fall on their knees and every nation will follow their prophet and they will say, "O so-and-so! Intercede (for us before Allah), "till (the right of) intercession is given to the Prophet (Muḥammad) ﷺ and that will be the day when Allah will raise him onto a station of praise and glory (i.e. Al-Maqām al-Maḥmūd).

[Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri]

The Prophet ﷺ will intercede with Allah Taʿālā to relieve the creation from the hardships on the plains of resurrection after they would have sought help from all the other prophets.

In the books of ḥadīth a lengthy ḥadīth is narrated by Anas ﷺ in which the Prophet ﷺ said, "The believers will be kept (waiting) on the Day of Resurrection so long that they will become worried and say, "Let us ask somebody to intercede far us with our Lord so that He may relieve us from our place."

The people will then go to the prophets from Ādam ﷺ to ʿĪsā ﷺ but every prophet will reply with the words 'I am not fit for this undertaking' and recount some error of his that he had committed. Eventually they will come to the Prophet ﷺ, and he will say : "I am fit for it. My *Umma*! My *Umma*!"

He will then fall down in prostration before Allah Taʿālā, and in the words of the Prophet ﷺ as narrated in the ḥadīth: "He (i.e. Allah) will leave me in prostration as long as He wills and then He will say, 'O Muḥammad, raise your head and speak, for you will be listened to, and intercede, for your intercession will be accepted, and ask, your request will be granted.'" The Prophet ﷺ added, "So I will raise my head and glorify and praise Him as He will teach me. Then I will intercede."

[Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri]

Besides this form of intercession there will also be intercession for other purposes e.g. to acquit those that are to be sent to the Fire; to enter a group of believers into Paradise without reckoning; to raise the ranks of those in Paradise and to remove those believers that have already entered the Fire.

والميثاق الذي أخذه الله تعالى من آدم وذريته حق

The covenant (*Mīthāq*) which Allah made with Ādam ﵇ and his offspring is true.[54]

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[54] This is mentioned in the verse of the Qurʾān:

وَإِذۡ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنۢ بَنِيٓ ءَادَمَ مِن ظُهُورِهِمۡ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمۡ وَأَشۡهَدَهُمۡ عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِهِمۡ أَلَسۡتُ بِرَبِّكُمۡۖ قَالُواْ بَلَىٰ شَهِدۡنَآۚ أَن تَقُولُواْ يَوۡمَ ٱلۡقِيَٰمَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنۡ هَٰذَا غَٰفِلِينَ

"And when your Lord brought forth from the loins of the children of Adam their progeny, and made them testify against themselves: "Am I not your Cherisher?" they said: "Indeed, we do testify." Lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: "Verily, we were unaware of this."

Sūra al-Aʿrāf 172

The precise manner in which this covenant was taken from the children of Ādam is unknown to us. Nevertheless we confirm its having taken place as the Qurʾān has informed us.

In a ḥadīth the following is recorded:

إن الله خلق آدم عليه السلام ثم مسح ظهره بيمينه فاستخرج منه ذرية، قال خلقت هؤلاء للجنة وبعمل أهل الجنة يعملون، ثم مسح ظهره، فاستخرج منه ذرية، قال

خلقت هؤلاء للنار وبعمل أهل النار يعملون، فقال رجل يا رسول الله ففيم العمل؟ قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إن الله عز وجل إذا خلق العبد للجنة استعمله بعمل أهل الجنة حتى يموت على عمل من أعمال أهل الجنة فيدخل به الجنة وإذا خلق العبد للنار استعمله بعمل أهل النار حتى يموت على عمل من أعمال أهل النار فيدخل به النار

Allah created Ādam and then wiped His hand over his back, brought out some of his progeny and said: “I have created these people for Paradise and they will do the actions of the people of Paradise.” He then wiped his back again and brought out some of his progeny and said: “I have created these people for the Fire and they will do the actions of the people of the Fire. One person then asked: “O Messenger of Allah! What then is action for?” The Prophet ﷺ replied: “When Allah Almighty creates a servant for Paradise he makes him do the actions of the people of Paradise until he passes away on such actions and thereby enters Paradise. Similarly, when Allah Almighty creates a servant for the Fire he makes him do the actions of the people of the Fire until he passes away on such actions and thereby enters the Fire.”

(Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī)

وقد علم الله تعالى فيما لم يزل عدد من يدخل الجنة وعدد من يدخل النار جملة واحدة ، فلا يزاد في ذلك العدد ولا ينقص منه

Indeed Allah Taʿālā knew, in eternity, the exact number of those who would enter Paradise and the exact number of those who would enter the Fire. This number will neither be increased nor decreased.

وكذلك أفعالهم فيما علم منهم أن يفعلوه ، وكل ميسر لما خلق له ، والأعمال بالخواتيم ، والسعيد من سعد بقضاء الله تعالى ، والشقي من شقي بقضاء الله تعالى

Similarly their actions are those that were known to Allah that they will carry out. Each person is facilitated to what he was created for.[55]

[55] *Taqdīr* (Pre-destination) is a secret of Allah Taʿālā in his creation. It is something beyond human comprehension. It constitutes the belief that Allah Taʿālā in eternity had known and predetermined everything that was to occur, at which time and in which way. Everything that occurs in the universe is in accordance with this predetermination.

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَٰهُ بِقَدَرٍ

Verily, We have created all things in proportion and measure.

[Sūra Al-Qamar 49]

Together with this belief in predestination it must also be accepted that man has been given a choice to adopt either the path of righteousness or iniquity. Man's being rewarded or punished in the hereafter will be on the basis of his exercising this choice in the right or wrong way. The focus of man should be on exercising this choice correctly rather than the predetermination of Allah Taʿālā, of which man has no knowledge. The Prophet ﷺ has instructed us to refrain from discussing predestination.

عن جابر بن عبد الله رضي الله عنهما ، قال جاء سراقة بن مالك بن جعشم فقال يا رسول الله بين لنا ديننا كأنا خلقنا الآن ، فيم العمل اليوم أفيما جفت به الأقلام وجرت به المقادير، أم فيما يستقبل قال لا بل فيما جفت به الأقلام وجرت به المقادير، قال ففيم العمل قال زهير ثم تكلم أبو الزبير بشيء لم أفهمه ، فسألت ما قال فقال اعملوا فكل ميسر

It is reported by Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh ؓ that Surāqa ibn Mālik ibn Juʿshum ؓ came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: O Messenger of Allah, explain our religion to us (in a way) as if we have been created just now. The deeds we do today, are they something that the pens have dried (after recording them) and they are occurring according to a predetermined decree or are these deeds occurring currently (i.e. without any predetermination)?

The Prophet ﷺ replied: "In fact, they are something that the pens have dried upon (after recording them) and they are occurring according to a predetermined decree."
Surāqa then asked: "If it is so, then what is the use of doing good deeds?"
The Prophet ﷺ replied: "Continue doing action for every person is facilitated (to what he was created for.)"

[Muslim]

In another ḥadīth narrated by Sayyidunā ʿAlī ؓ :

كنا في جنازة في بقيع الغرقد فأتانا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقعد وقعدنا حوله ومعه مخصرة فنكس فجعل ينكت بمخصرته ثم قال ما منكم من أحد ما من نفس منفوسة إلا وقد كتب الله مكانها من الجنة والنار وإلا وقد كتبت شقية أو سعيدة قال فقال رجل يا رسول الله أفلا نمكث على كتابنا وندع العمل فقال من كان من أهل السعادة فسيصير إلى عمل أهل السعادة ومن كان من أهل الشقاوة فسيصير إلى عمل أهل الشقاوة فقال اعملوا فكل ميسر أما أهل السعادة فييسرون لعمل أهل السعادة وأما أهل الشقاوة فييسرون لعمل أهل الشقاوة ثم قرأ فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَىٰ وَٱتَّقَىٰ ﴿٥﴾ وَصَدَّقَ بِٱلْحُسْنَىٰ ﴿٦﴾ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُۥ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ ﴿٧﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْۢ بَخِلَ وَٱسْتَغْنَىٰ ﴿٨﴾ وَكَذَّبَ بِٱلْحُسْنَىٰ ﴿٩﴾ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُۥ لِلْعُسْرَىٰ ﴿١٠﴾

While we were in a funeral procession in the *Baqīʿ* Cemetery, Allah's Messenger ﷺ came and sat down, and we sat around him. He had a small

stick in his hand and he lowered his head and began scraping the ground with it.

He then said, "There is none among you, and no created soul but has his place written for him either in Paradise or in the Fire, and also has his fate of being fortunate or wretched (in the Hereafter) written for him."

A man said, "O Messenger of Allah! Shall we depend upon what is written for us and give up doing (good) deeds? For whoever among us is destined to be fortunate (in the Hereafter), will join the fortunate people and whoever among us is destined to be miserable will do such deeds as are characteristic of the people who are destined to misery."

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Those who are destined to be fortunate (in the Hereafter) will find it easy to do the deeds characteristic of those destined to fortune, while those who are to be among the wretched (in the Hereafter), will find it easy to do the deeds characteristic of those destined to misery."

Then he recited the verses:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَىٰ وَٱتَّقَىٰ ﴿٥﴾ وَصَدَّقَ بِٱلْحُسْنَىٰ ﴿٦﴾ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُۥ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ ﴿٧﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْۢ
بَخِلَ وَٱسْتَغْنَىٰ ﴿٨﴾ وَكَذَّبَ بِٱلْحُسْنَىٰ ﴿٩﴾ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُۥ لِلْعُسْرَىٰ ﴿١٠﴾

As for him who gives (in charity) and keeps his duty to Allah and believes in the best reward from Allah, We will facilitate for him the path of ease. But he

Actions are judged according to the last of them. The fortunate is he who was fortunate by the decree of Allah, and the wretched is he who was wretched by the decree of Allah.[56]

وأصل القدر سر الله تعالى في خلقه ، لم يطلع على ذلك ملك مقرب ولا نبي مرسل والتعمق والنظر في ذلك ذريعة الخذلان وسلم الحرمان ودرجة

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who is a greedy miser and thinks himself self sufficient, and denies the Best reward from Allah we will facilitate for him the path for evil'. (Qurʾān 92:5-10)

[Bukhārī, Muslim]

The Qadariyya sect denied *Taqdir* (Predestination) and held the false belief that everything that occurs was not predetermined in the knowledge of Allah Taʿālā but Allah Taʿālā comes to know of them as they occur.

[56] This fortune and wretchedness is by the decree and predetermination of Allah Taʿālā and is established by the final actions of a person prior to his demise. A person who led a life of disbelief and sin but towards the end of his life repented and believed in Allah Taʿālā is fortunate and successful and will be made to enter Paradise. On the other hand a man who led a life of belief and righteousness but later reneged and died on disbelief is wretched and will be thrown into the fire of Jahannam.

الطغيان ، فالحذر كل الحذر من ذلك نظرا وفكرا ووسوسة ، فإن الله تعالى طوى علم القدر عن أنامه ونهاهم عن مرامه كما قال تعالى في كتابه ﴿ لَا يُسْئَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْئَلُونَ ﴾ فمن سأل لم فعل فقد رد حُكم الكتاب ، ومن رد حكم الكتاب كان من الكافرين

The exact nature of *Taqdīr* (Predetermination) is Allah's secret in His creation, and no angel brought near (the Throne) nor any prophet sent (with a message) has knowledge of it. Delving into it and ruminating about it leads to loss, is a stairway to deprivation, and a step towards deviation.

So beware about thinking, reflecting or letting doubts assail you with regards to this matter. Allah has kept the knowledge of predetermination away from the creation, and has forbidden them to investigate into it, as Allah has said in His Book, "*He is not asked about what He does but they are asked*." Hence anyone who asks: 'Why did He do that?' has rejected the judgement of the Book, and anyone who rejects the judgement of the Book is a disbeliever.

فهذه جملة ما يحتاج إليه من هو منور قلبه من أولياء الله تعالى ، وهي درجة الراسخين في العلم ، لأن العلم علمان علم في الخلق موجود ، وعلم في الخلق مفقود ، فإنكار العلم الموجود كفر ، وادعاء العلم المفقود كفر ولا يثبت الإيمان إلا بقبول العلم الموجود ، وترك طلب العلم المفقود

This is the gist of what those of Allah's friends with enlightened hearts need to know. This constitutes the grade of those firmly grounded in knowledge. For there are two kinds of knowledge: knowledge which is accessible to created beings, and knowledge which is not accessible to created beings. Denying the knowledge which is accessible is disbelief, and claiming (to possess) knowledge which is inaccessible is disbelief. Belief can only be correct when accessible knowledge is accepted and inaccessible knowledge is not sought after[57].

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[57] Knowledge that is accessible is that which is attained by clear proof e.g. knowledge of the Creator, His eternity, His power, His perfection from all facets of deficiency and traces of temporality. It also refers to knowledge of the commands and prohibitions of the Sharīʿa as found in the Qurʾān and ḥadīth. Rejection of such knowledge is disbelief.

Inaccessible knowledge is, for example, knowledge of the unseen that Allah has reserved for Himself, knowledge of destiny, the precise time of *Qiyāma* (Resurrection) etc. Claiming to possess such knowledge is also disbelief.

ونؤمن باللوح والقلم وبجميع ما فيه قد رقم

We believe in the Tablet (*Lawḥ*) and the Pen (*Qalam*)[58] and in everything written on it.

The Qur'ān tells us:

قُل لَّا يَعْلَمُ مَن فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ٱلْغَيْبَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهُ ۚ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ

Say: 'None knows the unseen in the heavens and earth except Allah.' And they are not aware when they shall be raised.

[Sūra Al-Naml 65]

However at times Allah Taʿālā does inform some of his messengers of things of the unseen as is mentioned in the verse:

عَٰلِمُ ٱلْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيْبِهِۦٓ أَحَدًا ﴿٢٦﴾ إِلَّا مَنِ ٱرْتَضَىٰ مِن رَّسُولٍ

Knower of the Unseen, and He discloses not His unseen to anyone, save only to such a Messenger as He is well-pleased with;

[Sūra al-Jinn 26-27]

[58] *Al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ* (The Protected Tablet) and *al-Qalam* (the Pen) are both celestial creations of Allah Taʿālā made from light.

The Qurʾān speaks of the Tablet in the verse:

بَلۡ هُوَ قُرۡءَانٞ مَّجِيدٞ ۝٢١ فِي لَوۡحٖ مَّحۡفُوظِۢ ۝٢٢

Nay, it is a glorious Qurʾān, (Inscribed) in a tablet preserved.

[Sūra Al-Burūj 22]

Likewise the Pen is also established in the Qurʾān, in the verse:

نٓۚ وَٱلۡقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسۡطُرُونَ

Nūn. By the Pen and by the (Record) which (men) write!

[Sūra al-Qalam 1]

It is our belief that with the command of Allah Taʿālā the Pen wrote on the Tablet everything that is to occur until the Day of Qiyamah. The Qurʾān states:

وَكُلَّ شَيۡءٍ أَحۡصَيۡنَٰهُ فِيٓ إِمَامٖ مُّبِينٖ

Everything We have numbered in a clear register.

[Sūra Yāsīn 12]

According to a ḥadīth reported by ʿUbāda ibn Ṣāmit ﵁ the Prophet ﷺ said:

إن أول ما خلق الله القلم فقال له اكتب قال يا رب وماذا أكتب
قال اكتب مقادير كل شيء حتى تقوم الساعة

فلو اجتمع الخلق كلهم على شيء كتبه الله تعالى فيه أنه كائن ليجعلوه غير كائن لم يقدروا عليه ولو اجتمعوا كلهم على شيء لم يكتبه الله تعالى فيه ليجعلوه كائنا لم يقدروا عليه جف القلم بما هو كائن إلى يوم القيامة ، وما أخطأ العبد لم يكن ليصيبه ، وما أصابه لم يكن ليخطئه

If all of creation were to gather together to make something fail to exist, whose existence Allah had written on the Tablet, they would not be able to do so. Likewise, if all of creation were to gather together to make something exist which Allah had not written on it, they would not be able to do so. The Pen has dried having recorded all that will occur until the Day of Judgement. Whatever a person misses he would have never obtained, and whatever he gets, he would have never missed.[59]

The first thing that Allah created was the Pen and He said to it 'Write!' It said: 'My Lord, what shall I write?' He (Allah) replied: 'Write down what has been ordained for all things until the establishment of the Hour."

[Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, Musnad Aḥmad]

59

وعن أبي العباس عبد الله بن عباس رضي الله عنهما قال كنت خلف النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يوما فقال يا غلام إني أعلمك كلمات احفظ الله يحفظك، احفظ الله تجده تجاهك، إذا سألت فاسأل الله، وإذا استعنت فاستعن بالله، واعلم أن الأمة لو

وعلى العبد أن يعلم أن الله قد سبق علمه في كل كائن من خلقه ، فقدر ذلك تقديرا محكما مبرما ليس فيه ناقض ولا معقب ولا مزيل ولا مغير ولا محول ولا ناقص ولا زائد من خلقه في سماواته وأرضه ، وذلك من عقد الإيمان وأصول المعرفة والاعتراف بتوحيد الله تعالى وربوبيته ، كما قال تعالى في كتابه ﴿ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَّرَهُۥ تَقْدِيرًا ﴾ وقال تعالى ﴿ وَكَانَ

اجتمعت على أن ينفعوك بشيء لم ينفعوك إلا بشيء قد كتبه الله لك ، وإن اجتمعوا على أن يضروك بشيء لم يضروك إلا بشيء قد كتبه الله عليك ، رفعت الأقلام ، وجفت الصحف

Ibn ʿAbbās ﷺ reports that once I was riding behind the Prophet ﷺ when he said to me: "Young man, I will teach you some words: Preserve (your obligations toward) Allah and He will preserve you. Guard (your obligations toward) Allah, and you will find Him by your side. When you ask, ask Allah. When you seek aid, seek it from Allah. And know, that if the entire nation got together to benefit you in some way, they could never benefit you at all except for that which Allah had already decreed for you. And, if they all got together to harm you in some way, they could do you no harm except for that which Allah had already decreed for you. The pens have been lifted, and the pages have dried."

[Tirmidhī]

أَمْرُ ٱللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَّقْدُورًا ﴾ فويل لمن صار لله تعالى في القدر خصيما ، وأحضر للنظر فيه قلبا سقيما ، لقد التمس بوهمه في فحص الغيب سرا كتيما ، وعاد بما قال فيه أفاكا أثيما

It is necessary for the slave (of Allah) to know that Allah already knew everything that was going to happen in His creation and He has decreed it in a detailed and decisive way. There is nothing that He has created in either the heavens or the earth that can contradict it, nor delay it, nor add to it, nor erase it, nor change it, nor decrease it, nor increase it in any way. This is a fundamental aspect of belief, a necessary element of recognition and admission of Allah's Oneness and Lordship. As Allah says in His Book: *'He created everything and decreed it in a detailed way'*. And He also says: "*The matter of Allah is a decree determined.*" So woe to anyone who argues with Allah concerning the decree and who, with a sick heart, starts delving into this matter. In his delusory attempt to investigate the Unseen, he is seeking a secret that can never be uncovered, and he returns as a sinner and a great liar.

والعرش والكرسي حق وهو مستغن عن العرش وما دونه محيط بكل شيء وفوقه ، وقد أعجز عن الإحاطة خلقه

The Throne (*ʿArsh*) and the Chair (*Kursīyy*) are true[60].

He is independent of the Throne and what is beneath it.

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[60] Allah Taʿālā has mentioned both *Al-ʿArsh* (the Throne) and *Al-Kursīyy* (the Chair) in the Noble Qurʾān:

وَسِعَ كُرۡسِيُّهُ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضَ

His Chair (*Kursīyy*) *extends over the heavens and the earth.*

[Sūra al-Baqara 255]

وَهُوَ رَبُّ ٱلۡعَرۡشِ ٱلۡعَظِيمِ

And he is the Lord of the Mighty Throne (*ʿArsh*)

[Sūra al-Tawba 129]

The ʿUlama have given different interpretations of these. However the most acceptable view is that since they are established in the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth and do not relate to practice they should be taken in their literal and apparent sense as physical celestial creations of Allah Taʿālā, even though we may not know their precise description. It is necessary to believe in them as such and not to interpret them figuratively.

We know from the Qurʾān and Ḥadith that the Throne is carried by angels and is the roof of *Jannat al-Firdaws* (the highest stage in Paradise.)

The Qurʾān tells us:

He encompasses everything and is above it[61], and what He has created is incapable of encompassing Him.

وَيَحۡمِلُ عَرۡشَ رَبِّكَ فَوۡقَهُمۡ يَوۡمَئِذٖ ثَمَٰنِيَةٞ

An on that day eight shall carry above them the Throne of your Lord.

[Sūra al-Ḥāqqa 17]

However Allah, Most High, is not in need of being positioned on the ʿ*Arsh* and remains as independent of position as He was before the creation of the ʿ*Arsh*.

[61] Allah Taʿālā encompasses everything by His Knowledge and He is above everything in status. His 'encompassing everything and being above' does not refer to His literally encompassing all things like a container surrounds what is contained within it nor to His literally being above everything as these are particular to corporeal entities.

The Qurʾān says:

وَهُوَ ٱلۡقَاهِرُ فَوۡقَ عِبَادِهِۦ

He is the Omnipotent over His slaves

[Sūra al-Anʿām 18]

Imām al-Ghazāli stated, in the section of his *Iḥyāʾ al-ʿUlūm* that deals with aspects of belief titled *Al-Qawāʾid wa l-ʿAqāʾid:*

ونقول إن الله اتخذ إبراهيم خليلا ، وكلم الله موسى تكليما إيمانا وتصديقا وتسليما

We say with belief, acceptance and submission that Allah took Ibrāhīm as an intimate friend and that He spoke directly to Mūsā[62].

> Allah is above the Throne, above the heavens, above everything, with a highness that does not make Him any closer to the Throne or the Heavens, just as it does not make Him any further from the Earth."

Ibn Ḥajar writes in *Fatḥ al-Bārī:*

> When we say: "Allah is above the Throne" *(Allāh ʿalā l-ʿArsh)*, it does not mean that He is touching it or that He is located on it or bounded by a certain side of the Throne. Rather, it is a report which is transmitted as is, and so we repeat it while at the same time negating any modality, for there is nothing like Him whatsoever, and from Him is all success.

[62] This has been mentioned in the Qurʾān and we therefore affirm it as is appropriate to the majesty of Allah, without any figurative interpretation. At the same time we do not attribute to Allah that which is not befitting for His majestic Being such as feelings of affection, that accompany intimacy in relation to human beings, or speech consisting of letters and sounds.

ونؤمن بالملائكة والنبيين ، والكتب المنزلة على المرسلين ، ونشهد أنهم كانوا على الحقّ المبين

We believe[63] in the Angels[64], and the Prophets[65], and the Books which were revealed to the Messengers[66], and we testify that they were all following the manifest Truth.

وَٱتَّخَذَ ٱللَّهُ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ خَلِيلاً

And Allah took Abraham as an intimate friend.

[Sūra al-Nisāʾ 125]

وَكَلَّمَ ٱللَّهُ مُوسَىٰ تَكْلِيمًا

And Allah spoke to Moses directly.

[Sūra al-Nisāʾ 164]

63 The Qurʾān states:

ءَامَنَ ٱلرَّسُولُ بِمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِن رَّبِّهِۦ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۚ كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ وَكُتُبِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّن رُّسُلِهِۦ

The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of Faith. Each one (of them) believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. "We make no distinction (they say) between one and another of His Messengers.

[Sūra al-Baqara 285]

64 The *Malāʾika* (Angels) are celestial creations of Allah Taʿālā made of light. They ascend and descend continuously between the heavens and earth and have been assigned various tasks. Their pleasure is in the remembrance of Allah and His worship. They do not disobey Allah in the least and never fail to do as He commands.

65 The Prophets are men chosen by Allah to deliver His message. Allah Taʿālā has honoured them to be intermediaries between Him and His servants. This rank of Prophethood is granted by Allah to whomsoever He wishes and cannot be attained by personal effort.

ٱللَّهُ أَعۡلَمُ حَيۡثُ يَجۡعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُۥ

Allah knows best with whom to place His message.

[Sūra al-Anʿām 124]

The Prophets are protected from all types of sin and are higher in rank than the angels. Amongst them some are of a higher rank than others.

تِلۡكَ ٱلرُّسُلُ فَضَّلۡنَا بَعۡضَهُمۡ عَلَىٰ بَعۡضٍ

ونسمي أهل قبلتنا مسلمين مؤمنين ، ما داموا بما جاء به النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم معترفين ، وله بكل ما قاله وأخبر مصدقين غير منكرين

We call the people of our *Qibla* Muslims and believers as long as they acknowledge what the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, brought, and accept as true everything that he said and told us about without denying any of it[67].

Those Messengers, some We have preferred above others.

[Sūra Al-Baqarah 253]

[66] Allah Taʿālā revealed books to various Prophets by speaking to them directly or through the intervention of an angel. Both the words and the meanings of these revelations are from Him. We believe in all the revealed books in their original form. However the versions of the Bible, Torah, Psalms, etc. that are prevalent today contain many interpolations and additions to the original Divine words and therefore cannot be entirely relied upon.

[67] Anas ibn Mālik ﷺ reports that the Prophet ﷺ said:

من صلى صلاتنا، واستقبل قبلتنا وأكل ذبيحتنا، فذلك المسلم الذي له ذمة الله وذمة رسوله، فلا تُخفروا الله في ذمته

ولا نخوض في الله ولا نماري في دين الله

We do not enter into vain talk about Allah[68] nor are we unmindful[69] of the religion of Allah.

"Whoever prays our prayer, faces our Qibla and eats what we slaughter, he is a Muslim and is under the protection of Allah and the protection of His Messenger. Do not act treacherously against Allah with respect to those under His protection."

[Bukhāri]

Any person who professes to accept whatever was brought as religion by the Prophet ﷺ will be accepted by us to be a Muslim and a believer and will be treated as such. However if it is proven that a person rejects an established doctrine of the Prophet ﷺ that is known to be part of Islam essentially then such a person cannot be regarded as a believer.

[68] We don't declare anything about the Self (*Dhāt*) of Allah Taʿālā without knowledge and without its being established by a transmitted proof from the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth. We also don't deliberate over the *Dhāt* as comprehending it is beyond our ability.

[69] The Arabic word *numārī*' could mean 'unmindful' and also could mean 'dispute'. If the latter is taken then the translation will read: "We do not dispute with regards to the religion of Allah." In other words it is incorrect to create doubts in the minds of the people of truth by disputing in religious

ولا نجادل في القرءان ، ونشهد أنه كلام رب العالمين ، نزل به الروح الأمين ، فعلمه سيد المرسلين محمدا صلى الله عليه وسلم ، وهو كلام الله تعالى ، لا يساويه شيء من كلام المخلوقين ، ولا نقول بخلقه ، ولا نخالف جماعة المسلمين

We do not argue about the Qurʾān[70] and we testify that it is the speech of the Lord of all the Worlds which the Trustworthy Spirit brought down and taught the most honoured of all Messengers, Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace[71]. It is the

matters raising the doubts created by the heretics seeking to misguide people.

70 We do not argue about the Qurʾān but accept it to be the eternal uncreated speech of Allah Taʿālā that does not consist of letters and sounds. Likewise we accept all the established modes of recitation (*Qirāʾāt*) and we do not quarrel over them.

71 The Qurʾān was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ through the intervention of the angel Jibrīl ؑ:

speech of Allah and no speech of any created being is comparable to it. We do not say that it is created and we do not go against the general body of Muslims[72].

وَإِنَّهُۥ لَتَنزِيلُ رَبِّ ٱلۡعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿١٩٢﴾ نَزَلَ بِهِ ٱلرُّوحُ ٱلۡأَمِينُ ﴿١٩٣﴾ عَلَىٰ قَلۡبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ ٱلۡمُنذِرِينَ ﴿١٩٤﴾ بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيّٖ مُّبِينٖ ﴿١٩٥﴾

Verily this is a Revelation from the Lord of the Worlds: brought down by the Trustworthy Spirit, upon your heart so that you may be one of the warners, in a clear Arabic tongue.

[Sūra al-Shuʿarāʾ 192-193]

The words of the Qurʾān were taught to the Prophet ﷺ by the angel Jibrīl ﷺ:

عَلَّمَهُۥ شَدِيدُ ٱلۡقُوَىٰ

One of mighty powers had taught him

[Sūra al-Najm 5]

72 Allah Taʿālā has honoured this *Umma* by granting its consensus (*Ijmāʿ*) the status of binding evidence. Acting contrary to consensus of the *Umma* is deviation. Allah Taʿālā says:

وَمَن يُشَاقِقِ ٱلرَّسُولَ مِنۢ بَعۡدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ ٱلۡهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعۡ غَيۡرَ سَبِيلِ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِۦ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصۡلِهِۦ جَهَنَّمَۖ وَسَآءَتۡ مَصِيرًا

ولا نكفر أحدا من أهل القبلة بذنب ما لم يستحله

We do not declare any of the people of the *Qibla* to be disbelievers because of any wrong action (they have done), as long as they do not consider that action to be lawful[73].

Whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows a path other than that of the believers we will leave him in the path he has chosen, and land him In Hell - what an evil refuge!

[Sūra al-Nisāʾ 115]

The Prophet ﷺ said:

من فارق الجماعة قيد شبر فقد خلع ربقة الإسلام من عنقه

"*Whoever separates from the group* (*Jamāʿa*) *even the distance of a handspan has indeed thrown off the yoke of Islam from his neck."*

[Tirmidhī]

He also said:

عليكم بالسواد الأعظم

"Stick to the vast majority!"

[Ibn Mājah]

[73] Commission of a major (or minor) sin, although forbidden, does not cast a person out of the fold of Islam. However if a person considers lawful that which is definitively proven to be forbidden by Allah then such a person has in fact rejected the law of Allah and is therefore a disbeliever.

ولا نقول لا يضر مع الإيمان ذنب لمن عمله

Nor do we say that the wrong action of a man who has belief does not have any harmful effect on him[74].

The proof that sin itself does not amount to disbelief are the following verses:

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ تُوبُوٓاْ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا

O you who believe! Turn to Allah in sincere repentance

[Sūra al-Taḥrīm 8]

وَإِن طَآئِفَتَانِ مِنَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ٱقْتَتَلُواْ فَأَصْلِحُواْ بَيْنَهُمَا

If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make you peace between them.

[Sūra al-Ḥujurāt 9]

In both the above verses the Qurʾān refers to those that committed sin as 'believers' clearly indicating that the commission of sin does not render a person a disbeliever, as was the view of the *Khawarij*, nor out of the fold of Islam, as was the view held by the *Muʿtazila*.

[74] The *Murjiʾa* sect held the view that wrong actions have no harmful effect on a person as long he has belief. This belief was diametrically opposed to the view of the *Khawarij* who held that wrong actions render a person a disbeliever.

نرجو للمحسنين من المؤمنين أن يعفو عنهم ويدخلهم الجنة برحمته ولا نأمن عليهم ، ولا نشهد لهم بالجنة ، ونستغفر لمسيئهم ونخاف عليهم ولا نقنطهم

We hope that Allah will pardon the people of right action among the believers and grant them entrance into Paradise through His mercy[75],

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The *Ahl al-Sunna* do not agree with either of these extremes and maintain that evil actions do have an effect on the person who commits them both in this world and the hereafter. The numerous verses of the Qurʾān and narrations of ḥādīth that contain severe warnings of punishment for those that disobey the laws of Allah are clear testimony to this.

[75] Right action does not guarantee a person salvation or entrance into Paradise. Rather it is the mercy and benevolence of the Almighty that is sought after. The Prophet ﷺ said:

لن يدخل أحدكم الجنة بعمله، قالوا ولا أنت يا رسول الله قال ولا أنا إلا أن يتغمدني الله برحمة منه وفضل

but we cannot be sure of this, and we cannot testify that they will be in Paradise[76]. We ask forgiveness for the people of wrong action among the believers[77] and, although we fear for them, we do not despair regarding them[78].

None of you will enter Paradise through his good deeds. They (the Prophet's companions) said, 'Not even you, O Allah's Messenger?' He said, "Not even me, unless Allah covers me with His favour and mercy.

[Bukhārī]

[76] We cannot be certain about any specific believer that he will most certainly enter Paradise as the possibility of his committing disbelief or his actions being rejected on account of pride or ostentation exists and is unknown to us.

[77] Believers have been commanded to seek forgiveness for one another.

فَقُلْتُ ٱسْتَغْفِرُوا۟ رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ غَفَّارًا

I (the Prophet Nūḥ ﷺ) said: Ask forgiveness from your Lord; for He is always Most-Forgiving

[Sūra Nūḥ 10]

The angels and the prophets have also been instructed to seek forgiveness for the believers.

[78] Despair from the mercy of Allah is a sign of deviation.

والأمن والإياس ينقلان عن ملة الإسلام ، وسبيل الحق بينهما لأهل القبلة

Certainty (of deliverance) and despair (of mercy) both remove one from the true religion[79]. The path of truth for the people of the *Qibla* lies between the two[80].

وَمَن يَقْنَطُ مِن رَّحْمَةِ رَبِّهِۦٓ إِلَّا ٱلضَّآلُّونَ

And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord, excepting those that are astray?

[Sūra al-Ḥijr 56]

79 Allah Taʿālā has promised reward for those who do good and has warned of punishment for the evil doers. He has the ability to carry out either on whomsoever He wills. Being certain of salvation is to regard Allah to be unable to mete out punishment and despairing of His mercy implies His inability to grant reward. Both of these lead to disbelief.

أَفَأَمِنُواْ مَكْرَ ٱللَّهِۚ فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ ٱللَّهِ إِلَّا ٱلْقَوْمُ ٱلْخَٰسِرُونَ

Did they then feel secure against the plan of Allah? But no one can feel secure from the plan of Allah, except those (doomed) to ruin.

[Sūra al-Aʿrāf 99]

يَـٰبَنِىَّ ٱذۡهَبُواْ فَتَحَسَّسُواْ مِن يُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ وَلَا تَاْيۡـَٔسُواْ مِن رَّوۡحِ ٱللَّهِۖ إِنَّهُۥ لَا
يَاْيۡـَٔسُ مِن رَّوۡحِ ٱللَّهِ إِلَّا ٱلۡقَوۡمُ ٱلۡكَـٰفِرُونَ

O my sons go and enquire about Joseph and his brother, and never give up hope of Allah's comfort: truly no one despairs of Allah's comfort, except those who have no Faith.

[Sūra Yūsuf 87]

80 Hope and fear are like two wings for a believer in his flight to Allah and the abode of the hereafter. A person must fear and be conscious of Allah's reckoning as well as be hopeful of Allah's mercy at the same time.

تَتَجَافَىٰ جُنُوبُهُمۡ عَنِ ٱلۡمَضَاجِعِ يَدۡعُونَ رَبَّهُمۡ
خَوۡفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقۡنَـٰهُمۡ يُنفِقُونَ

Their limbs do forsake their beds of sleep, while they call on their Lord, in Fear and Hope: and they spend (in Charity) out of the sustenance which we have bestowed on them.

[Sūra al-Sajda 16]

أُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَدۡعُونَ يَبۡتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ ٱلۡوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمۡ أَقۡرَبُ
وَيَرۡجُونَ رَحۡمَتَهُۥ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُۥٓ

Those they call upon are themselves seeking the means to come to their Lord, which of them shall be nearer; they hope for His mercy, and fear His chastisement.

[Sūra al-Isrāʾ 57]

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ هُم مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ رَبِّهِم مُّشْفِقُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ هُم بِـَٔايَـٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ هُم بِرَبِّهِمْ لَا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَآ ءَاتَوا۟ وَّقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ رَٰجِعُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ يُسَـٰرِعُونَ فِى ٱلْخَيْرَٰتِ وَهُمْ لَهَا سَـٰبِقُونَ

Surely those who tremble in fear of their Lord, and those who believe in the signs of their Lord, and those who associate naught with their Lord, and those who give what they give, their hearts full of fear because they are returning to their Lord - it is these who hasten in every good work, and these who are foremost in them.

[Sūra al-Muʾminūn 57-61]

عن عائشة رضي الله عنها قالت قلت يا رسول الله قول الله وَٱلَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا ءاتَوا۟ وَّقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ أهو الذي يزني ويشرب الخمر ويسرق قال لا يا ابنة الصديق ، ولكنه الرجل يصوم ويصلي ويتصدق ويخاف أن لا يُقبل منه

ʿĀʾisha ﵂ once asked the Prophet ﷺ whether the verse of the Qurʾān "*those who give what they give whilst their hearts are full of fear"* refers to one who commits fornication and drinks wine. The Prophet ﷺ replied, "No, O

ولا يخرج العبد من الإيمان إلا بجحود ما أدخله فيه

A person does not step out of belief except by rejecting what brought him into it[81].

والإيمان هو الإقرار باللسان والتصديق بالجنان

Belief consists of affirmation by the tongue and acceptance by the heart[82].

وجميع ما صح عن رسول الله ﷺ من الشرع والبيان كله حق

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daughter of the Truthful (*Al-Ṣiddīq*)! Instead it refers to the man who fasts, prays and gives charity yet he fears that this will not be accepted from him." [Tirmidhī]

[81] *Īmān* (Belief or Faith) and *Kufr* (Disbelief) are the opposites of one another. A person only becomes a believer once he accepts the necessary requirements for belief. Likewise he becomes a disbeliever by denying any of these requirements. Commission of sin does not render one a disbeliever.

[82] The essence of *Īmān* (Belief or Faith) is acceptance by the heart of the existence of Allah and the truth of everything that the Prophet ﷺ brought. However since this is an internal action, hidden from others, affirmation by the tongue is used as a sign for this acceptance and forms the basis for the application of worldly laws.

Everything that is authentically proven from the Prophet, upon him be peace, regarding the *Sharī a* and the explanation (of the Qurā n and of Islam), all of it is true[83].

والإيمان واحد وأهله في أصله سواء والتفاضل بينهم بالخشية والتقى
ومخالفة الهوى وملازمة الأولى

Belief is, in essence, the same for everyone[84]. The superiority of some over others in it is due to their fear and awareness of Allah, their opposition to their desires, and their adherence to what is most pleasing to Allah[85].

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[83] A believer is required to accept everything that is proven from the Prophet ﷺ even though all the details are not spelt out or known to him. This form of 'concise belief' applies, for example, to belief generally in the angels, prophets etc. However when the details are noted then 'detailed belief' is necessary e.g. specific belief in the angel Jibrīl ﷺ or the prophet Mūsā ﷺ.

[84] The essence of *Īmān* (Belief or Faith) is complete unreserved acceptance by the heart to the level of certainty. This acceptance is the same for all believers and cannot be said to be found more in some than others.

[85] Differences exist amongst believers with respect to the radiance of their faith, the good actions it gives rise to and the effects it brings about. This is what is meant in the numerous verses of the Qurʾān and in the ḥadīth when

والمؤمنون كلهم أولياء الرحمن وأكرمهم عند الله أطوعهم وأتبعهم للقرآن

All believers are the friends of Allah[86] and the noblest of them in the sight of Allah are those who are the most obedient and who most closely follow the Qurʾān[87].

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increase in faith is referred to. However there can be no increase or decrease in the certainty of faith itself.

إِنَّمَا ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ ٱللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَـٰتُهُۥ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَـٰنًا

Those only are believers who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become full of fear, and when His signs are recited to them, it increases them in faith.
[Sūra al-Anfāl 2]

86 The Qurʾān says:

ٱللَّهُ وَلِىُّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟

Allah is the Friend / Protector of those who have faith
[Sūra al-Baqara 257]

87 The Qurʾān tells us:

والإيمان هو الإيمان بالله وملائكته وكتبه ورسله واليوم الآخر والقدر خيره وشره وحلوه ومره من الله تعالى

Belief consists of belief in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and belief that the Decree - both the good of it and the evil of it, the sweet of it and the bitter of it - is from Allah, Most High[88].

إِنَّ أَكۡرَمَكُمۡ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ أَتۡقَىٰكُمۡۚ

Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous amongst you.

[Sūra al-Ḥujurāt 13]

The Prophet ﷺ said:

لا فضل لعربي على أعجمي إلا بالتقوى

There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab except in piety.

[Musnad Aḥmad]

[88] Each of these aspects of faith has been explained in the preceding pages and is summed up by Imām al-Ṭaḥawī in this passage based on the following verse of the Qurʾān and the ḥadīth of Jibrīl عليه السلام.

ونحن مؤمنون بذلك كله لا نفرق بين أحد من رسله ونصدقهم كلهم على ما جاءوا به

ءَامَنَ ٱلرَّسُولُ بِمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡهِ مِن رَّبِّهِۦ وَٱلۡمُؤۡمِنُونَۚ كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَمَلَـٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ وَكُتُبِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيۡنَ أَحَدٍ مِّن رُّسُلِهِۦۚ وَقَالُواْ سَمِعۡنَا وَأَطَعۡنَاۖ غُفۡرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيۡكَ ٱلۡمَصِيرُ

The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, as do the faithful. They all believe in God, His angels, His scriptures, and His messengers. 'We make no distinction between any of His messengers,' they say, 'We hear and obey. Grant us Your forgiveness, our Lord. To You we all return!'

[Sūra al-Baqara 285]

Bukhāri and Muslim narrate the well-known ḥadīth narrated by ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﵁ wherein it is mentioned that the Archangel Jibrīl ﵇ came to the Prophet ﷺ in the form of a man and asked him questions relating to the religion. When asked about *Īmān* (faith) the Prophet ﷺ said:

أن تؤمن بالله وملائكته وكتبه ورسله واليوم الآخر ، وتؤمن بالقدر خيره وشره

Faith consists of belief in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last day and to believe in the Decree – the good of it and the bad of it.

[Bukhārī, Muslim]

We are believers in all of that. We do not make any distinction between any of the Messengers and we accept as true what all of them brought[89].

[89] All the Prophets carried Allah's message to His slaves. We are required to believe in each of them as a true Messenger of Allah. Rejection of any one Messenger of Allah renders one a disbeliever.

لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّن رُّسُلِهِۦ

We make no distinction between any one of His Messengers.

[Sūra al-Baqara 285]

قُولُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا بِٱللَّهِ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ وَإِسْمَـٰعِيلَ وَإِسْحَـٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ
وَٱلْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَآ أُوتِىَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَآ أُوتِىَ ٱلنَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ
لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُۥ مُسْلِمُونَ

So [you believers], say, 'We believe in God and in what was sent down to us and what was sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and what was given to Moses, Jesus, and all the prophets by their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we devote ourselves to Him.'

[Sūra al-Baqara 136]

وأهل الكبائر من أمة محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم في النار لا يخلدون إذا ماتوا وهم موحدون وإن لم يكونوا تائبين بعد أن لقوا الله عارفين مؤمنين

Those of the community of Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, who have committed grave sins will not remain forever in the Fire, provided they die and meet Allah as believers affirming His Oneness even if they have not repented[90].

وهم في مشيئته وحكمه إن شاء غفر لهم وعفا عنهم بفضله ، كما ذكر عز وجل في كتابه ﴿ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ ﴾ وإن شاء عذبهم في النار بعدله ثم يخرجُهم منها برحمته وشفاعة الشافعين من أهل طاعته ثم يبعثهم إلى جنته

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90 Being destined to dwell forever in the Fire (of *Jahannam*) is the most severe form of punishment and is therefore reserved as retribution for *Kufr* (disbelief), which is the worst crime. Hence a believer that has been entered into *Jahannam*, for sins that he may have committed and not repented from, will not remain therein forever and will eventually be admitted to Paradise. This is in refutation of the view of the Muʿtazila who held the opinion that such a person will remain in the Fire forever based on their assumption, as explained previously, that he is out of the fold of Islam.

They are subject to His Will and Judgement. If He wishes, He will forgive them and pardon them through His grace, as He has mentioned in the Qurʾān when He said: *'And He forgives anything less than that (shirk) to whoever He wills'* and if He wishes, He will punish them in the Fire out of His Justice[91]. Thereafter he will bring them out of the Fire through His Mercy, and the intercession of those who were obedient to Him[92], and send them to Paradise[93].

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[91] It is not binding on Allah to punish those who commit sins, even if these sins be major and even if those that committed them had not repented. If Allah wills He may pardon them out of His Grace and admit them directly into Paradise.

[92] The opportunity to intercede will also be granted, in addition to prophets, to angels and righteous believers as mentioned in part of a lengthy ḥadīth:

قال فيقول الله تعالى شفعت الملائكة وشفع النبيون وشفع المؤمنون
ولم يبق إلا أرحم الراحمين

The Prophet ﷺ said: Allah, Most High, will then say: The Angels have interceded, the Prophets have interceded and the believers have interceded. None remains except the Most Merciful of all those who show mercy.

[Musnad Aḥmad, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim]

In another ḥadīth the Prophet ﷺ said:

ليدخلن الجنة بشفاعة رجل من أمتي أكثر من بني تميم

A number of people more than the tribe of Banū Tamīm will enter Paradise on account of the intercession of one person from my *Umma.*

[Musnad Aḥmad, Mustadrak al-Ḥākim,Tirmidhī]

93 In a ḥadith recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

أما أهل النار الذين هم أهلها فإنهم لا يموتون فيها ولا يحيون ولكن ناس أصابتهم النار بذنوبهم أو قال بخطاياهم فأماتهم إماتة حتى إذا كانوا فحما أذن بالشفاعة فجيء بهم ضبائر ضبائر فبثوا على أنهار الجنة ثم قيل يا أهل الجنة أفيضوا عليهم فينبتون نبات الحبة تكون في حميل السيل

The people of the Fire (i.e. the disbelievers) will remain there (forever), neither dying, nor living. But there are people who will enter the Fire because of their sins, and will (eventually) be caused to die (and lose all sense) therein, so that they become like burnt coals. Permission will then be granted for intercession to be made, and they will be brought forth in groups and scattered over rivers of Paradise, and it will be said, "O people of Paradise, pour water on them. Then they will grow (quickly) like seeds in the silt left by a flood.

[Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim]

وذلك بأن الله تعالى تولى أهل معرفته و لم يجعلهم في الدارين كأهل نكرته الذين خابوا من هدايته و لم ينالوا من ولايته اللهم يا ولي الإسلام وأهلـــه ثبتنا على الإسلام حتى نلقاك به

This is because Allah is the Protector of those who recognize Him[94] and does not treat them in both worlds in the same way as He treats those who fail to recognize Him and who are bereft of His guidance and have failed to obtain His protection[95]. O Allah, O Protector of Islam and its people; make us firm in Islam until we meet You[96].

94

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ مَوْلَى ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَأَنَّ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ لَا مَوْلَىٰ لَهُمْ

That is because Allah is the Protector of those who believe, but those who reject Allah have no protector.

[Sūra Muḥammad 11]

95 Allah tells us in the Qurʾān:

أَمْ حَسِبَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱجْتَرَحُوا۟ ٱلسَّيِّـَٔاتِ أَن نَّجْعَلَهُمْ كَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ سَوَآءً مَّحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ ۚ سَآءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ

Or do those who commit evil deeds think that We shall make them as those who believe and do righteous deeds, equal their living and their dying? How ill they judge!

[Sūra al-Jāthiya 21]

أَمْ نَجْعَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ كَٱلْمُفْسِدِينَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ أَمْ نَجْعَلُ ٱلْمُتَّقِينَ كَٱلْفُجَّارِ

Or shall We make those who believe and do righteous deeds as the workers of corruption in the earth, or shall We make the God-fearing as the transgressors?

[Sūra Ṣād 28]

96 Imām al-Ṭaḥāwī makes this supplication in accordance with the prayer of the Prophet ﷺ reported by Anas ﷺ:

يا ولي الإسلام وأهله ثبتني به حتى ألقاك

O Allah, O Protector of Islam and its people;
Make me firm in Islam until I meet You

[Majmaʿ al-Zawāʾid]

A similar prayer was made by the Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ:

ونرى الصلاة خلف كل بر وفاجر من أهل القبلة وعلى من مات منهم

We regard as valid praying behind any of the people of the *Qibla* whether right-acting or wrong-acting, and (we regard as valid) offering the funeral prayer over any of them when they die[97].

فَاطِرَ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ أَنتَ وَلِىِّۦ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْـَٔاخِرَةِ ۖ
تَوَفَّنِى مُسْلِمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِى بِٱلصَّـٰلِحِينَ

O Creator of the heavens and the earth! You are my Protector in this world and in the Hereafter. Take my soul (at death) as one submitting to your will (as a Muslim), and unite me with the righteous.

[Sūra Yūsuf 101]

97 The Prophet ﷺ said:

صلوا خلف كل بر و فاجر

Pray behind any pious or impious person.

(Bayhaqī)

In another ḥadīth the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

صلوا خلف من قال لا إله إلا الله وصلوا على من مات من أهل لا إله إلا الله

Pray behind anyone who professes that there is no God but Allah;
and offer the funeral prayer for anyone of those who profess
that there is no God but Allah.

(Dār Quṭnī)

ولا ننزل أحدا منهم جنة ولا نارا ، ولا نشهد عليهم بكفر ولا بشرك ولا بنفاق ما لم يظهر منهم شيء من ذلك ، ونذر سرائرهم إلى الله تعالى

The practice of the *Umma* since the time of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ and their successors has always been to offer prayer behind anyone including oppressive rulers, sinners and proponents of *bidʿa,* as long as their false beliefs did not lead to their being rendered out of the fold of Islam. The acceptable view of the *Ahl al-Sunna* is that being free of sin is not a prerequisite for the validity of leadership (*Imāma*) as was held by the *Rāfiḍa* sect of the Shīʿa.

The Prophet ﷺ himself offered funeral prayers for those of his companions that had passed away after being stoned to death for the commission of adultery.

Although there is no doubt regarding the validity of prayer behind such people (i.e. oppressive rulers, sinners and proponents of *bidʿa*), it is nevertheless agreed that to pray behind them is disliked and such people should not be appointed to lead the prayers.

Praying behind them may also be avoided if there is good reason to do so and there is no fear of any reprisal e.g. there is hope of their being induced to repent on account of this avoidance.

We do not say regarding any one of them that he will definitely enter Paradise or the Fire[98]. We do not accuse any of them of *kufr* (disbelief), *shirk* (polytheism), or *nifāq* (hypocrisy), as long as they have not openly demonstrated any of those things; and we leave their secrets to Allah[99].

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98 No matter how much good or bad we see in a person we cannot be certain of his entrance into Paradise (*Jannah*) or Hell (*Jahannam.*) It is only Allah who has knowledge of the unseen and knows the reality of the state in which a person passed away.

99 The Prophet ﷺ said:

أيما رجل قال لأخيه يا كافر فقد باء بها أحدهما

When a person calls his brother (in Islām) a disbeliever, one of them will certainly deserve the title.

(Bukhārī, Muslim)

The Qurʾān says:

وَلَا تَقۡفُ مَا لَيۡسَ لَكَ بِهِۦ عِلۡمٌ

And pursue not that of which you have no knowledge

[Sūra al-Isrāʾ 36]

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱجۡتَنِبُواْ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ ٱلظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعۡضَ ٱلظَّنِّ إِثۡمٌ

O you who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible)

[Sūra al-Ḥujurāt 12]

ولا نرى السيف على أحد من أمة محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم
إلا من وجب عليه السيف

We do not regard (as permissible) taking the life of any of the *Ummah* of Muḥammad[100], may Allah bless him and give him peace, unless it is obligatory (by Islamic law) to do so[101].

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[100] The Prophet ﷺ said:

أمرت أن أقاتل الناس حتى يقولوا لا إله إلا الله ، فإذا قالوها عصموا مني دماءهم وأموالهم إلا بحقها وحسابهم على الله

I have been ordered (by Allah) to fight the people until they proclaim, `None has the right to be worshipped but Allah'. Once they proclaim this, they protect their lives and property from me, except for cases of the law, and their account will be with Allah.

(Bukhārī)

[101] In a ḥadīth the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

لا يحل دم امرئ مسلم إلا بإحدى ثلاث الثيب الزاني ، والنفس بالنفس ، والتارك لدينه المفارق للجماعة

The blood of a Muslim is sacred except in three cases: a married person who commits illegal sexual intercourse, in *Qiṣāṣ* (equality in punishment) for murder, and the one who abandons his religion (i.e. an apostate) and leaves the group (of Muslims.)

(Bukhārī)

ولا نرى الخروج على أئمتنا وولاة أمورنا وإن جاروا ، ولا ندعو عليهم ، ولا ننزع يدا من طاعتهم ، ونرى طاعتهم من طاعة الله عز وجل فريضة ما لم يأمروا بمعصية ، وندعو لهم بالصلاح والمعافاة

We do not support rebellion against our leaders or those in charge of our affairs even if they are unjust, nor do we wish evil on them, nor do we withdraw from their obedience. We hold that obedience to them is part of obedience to Allah Almighty and therefore obligatory as long as they do not instruct us to commit sin[102]. We pray for their rectitude and wellbeing.

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[102] It is necessary for Muslims to have a leader that takes charge of their affairs, enforces Sharīʿa laws, protects the borders of the Islamic state, collects dues such as *Zakāh* and *Ṣadaqa*, establishes the *Jumuʿa* and *ʿĪd* prayers, resolves disputes and maintains general law and order. Obedience to this leader is obligatory on all citizens of the Islamic state as the Qurʾān states:

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِى ٱلْأَمْرِ مِنكُمْ

ونتبع السنة والجماعة ، ونجتنب الشذوذ والخلاف والفرقة

We follow the Way (of the Prophet ﷺ) and the Group (of Muslims), and we avoid deviation, differences and division[103].

O believers, obey Allah, and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you.

[Sūra al-Nisāʾ 59]

The Prophet ﷺ said:

من كره من أميره شيئا فليصبر ، فإنه من خرج من السلطان شبرا مات ميتة جاهلية

Whoever sees something he dislikes in his leader should be patient, because whoever rebels against the ruler, even by one fraction, and then dies, has died the death of the Age of Ignorance.

[Bukhārī]

Disobedience to the ruler leads to division amongst Muslims thereby weakening the Islamic state making it vulnerable to attack from its enemies. Obviously, the obligation of obedience to the ruler does not transcend the obligation to obey Allah, Most High. The Prophet ﷺ said:

لا طاعة لمخلوق في معصية الخالق

There is no obedience to anyone in disobedience to Allah.

[Aḥmad]

[103] The Qurʾān tells us:

وَمَن يُشَاقِقِ ٱلرَّسُولَ مِنۢ بَعۡدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ ٱلۡهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعۡ غَيۡرَ سَبِيلِ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِۦ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصۡلِهِۦ جَهَنَّمَۖ وَسَآءَتۡ مَصِيرًا

Whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows a path other than that of the believers we will leave him in the path he has chosen, and land him in Hell - what an evil refuge!

[Sūra al-Nisāʾ 115]

عن أبي نجيح العرباض بن سارية رضي الله عنه قال وعظنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم موعظة وجلت منها القلوب وذرفت منها العيون فقلنا يا رسول الله كأنها موعظة مودع فأوصنا قال أوصيكم بتقوى الله عز وجل والسمع والطاعة وإن تأمر عليكم عبد فإنه من يعش منكم فسيرى اختلافا كثيرا فعليكم بسنتي وسنة الخلفاء الراشدين من بعدي عضوا عليها بالنواجذ وإياكم ومحدثات الأمور فإن كل بدعة ضلالة

ʿIrbāḍ ibn Sāriya ﵁ reports that the Prophet ﷺ gave us an admonition which caused the hearts to tremble and the eyes to shed tears, so we said, "O Messenger of Allah, this is as if it were a farewell sermon, so counsel us!" He ﷺ said: I counsel you to fear Allah and to listen and obey even if a slave is made your leader. For indeed those that live long from amongst you will see great controversy. So stick to my way and the way of the rightly-guided caliphs after me! Cling to that with your molar teeth! Beware of innovations for every innovation is misguidance!

(Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī)

ونحبُ أهل العدل والأمانة ، ونبغض أهل الجور والخيانة

We love the people of justice and trustworthiness, and hate the people of injustice and treachery[104].

ونقول الله أعلم فيم اشتبه علينا علمه

When our knowledge about something is unclear, we say: 'Allah knows best.'[105]

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[104] Love and hate should only be for the sake of Allah. The Prophet ﷺ said:

من أحب لله وأبغض لله وأعطى لله ومنع لله فقد استكمل الإيمان

Whoever loves for the sake of Allah, hates for sake of Allah, gives for the sake of Allah and withholds for the sake of Allah has perfected faith.

(Abū Dāwūd)

[105] It is not possible for the human mind to solve all mysteries or comprehend all realities and it is therefore necessary for man to entrust these to Allah's knowledge. Allah, Most High, tells us:

وَمَآ أُوتِيتُم مِّنَ ٱلْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلاً

You have been given of knowledge nothing except a little.

[Sūra al-Isrāʾ 85]

ونرى المسح على الخفين في السفر والحضر كما جاء في الأثر

The angels acknowledged their inability to know except what Allah had taught them:

قَالُواْ سُبۡحَٰنَكَ لَا عِلۡمَ لَنَآ إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمۡتَنَآۖ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلۡعَلِيمُ ٱلۡحَكِيمُ

They said, 'Glory be to You! We know not save what you have taught us. Surely You are the All-knowing, the All-wise.'

[Sūra al-Baqara 32]

The Prophet ﷺ was himself instructed to say regarding the people of the Cave:

قُل رَّبِّيٓ أَعۡلَمُ بِعِدَّتِهِم

Say: 'My Lord knows best their number'

[Sūra al-Kahf 22]

قُلِ ٱللَّهُ أَعۡلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثُواْ

Say: 'Allah knows best how long they stayed'

[Sūra al-Kahf 26]

We regard (as valid) wiping over leather socks whether on a journey or at home, just as has come in the narrations[106].

والحجُّ والجهادُ ماضيانِ مع أولي الأمر من المسلمينَ بَرّهم وفاجرِهم إلى قيام الساعة لا يبطلهما شيءٌ ولا ينقضهما

The Pilgrimage and *Jihād* under the leadership of those in charge of the Muslims, whether they are right or wrong-acting, are continuing valid obligations until the Last Hour comes. Nothing can annul or cancel them[107].

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106 Although this is a matter of Fiqh rather than one of ʿAqīda, Imām al-Ṭaḥāwī mentions this in refutation of the Rāfiḍa sect who did not regard wiping over leather socks in *wuḍū* as valid.

The sheer number of narrations in this regard led the Ḥanafī jurist Abū al-Ḥasan al-Karkhī to say: 'I fear *kufr* for anyone who does not regard wiping over leather socks as valid.'

The eminent Tābiʿī, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said: 'I met 70 companions of the Prophet ﷺ who regarded wiping over leather socks (in *wuḍū*) as valid.'

107 Imām Ṭaḥawī especially mentions these matters of Fiqh in refutation of the Rāfiḍa sect who considered *ʿiṣma* (being free of sin) a prerequisite for *Imāma* (leadership) and therefore regarded *Jihād* as invalid until the

ونؤمن بالكرام الكاتبين ، فإن الله قد جعلهم علينا حافظين

We believe in the noble scribe-angels, for indeed Allah has appointed them over us as guardians[108].

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appearance of the awaited Imām. The position of the *Ahl al-Sunna* is that these acts are valid under the leadership of any Imām, even though he may not be free of sin.

[108] Allah Taʿālā tells us in the Qurʾān:

وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ ﴿١١﴾ يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

Verily over you (are appointed angels) to watch you, noble scribes. They know all that you do.

[Sūra al-Infiṭār 10-12]

مَّا يَلْفِظُ مِن قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ

Not a word does he utter but there is an observer by him, ready (to note it).

[Sūra Qāf 18]

Even though Allah, Most High, is well aware of the actions of every person, the wisdom of having angels record the deeds of a person, is to encourage him to do good deeds and abstain from evil as he would do knowing that someone is with him recording everything he does. In a ḥadīth the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

إن معكم من لا يفارقكم إلا عند الغائط وحين يفضي الرجل إلى أهله فاستحيوهم وأكرموهم

Indeed, with you are some (angels) who never leave you except when you answer the call of nature or are engaged in intimate relations with your wives. So be ashamed of them and honour them.

[Tirmidhī]

The records of these angels will be read out to a person on the Day of Judgement as mentioned in the verse:

يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُّحْضَرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِن سُوٓءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُۥٓ أَمَدًۢا بَعِيدًا

On the Day when every soul will be confronted with all the good it has done, and all the evil it has done, it will wish there were a great distance between it and its evil.

[Sūra Āl-ʿImrān 30]

Besides these angels, whose duty it is to record the deeds of a person, we learn from other verses of the Qurʾān and narrations of *aḥadīth* that there are other angels that remain with a person in order to protect him. These are referred to in the following verse:

لَهُۥ مُعَقِّبَٰتٌ مِّنۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِۦ يَحْفَظُونَهُۥ مِنْ أَمْرِ ٱللَّهِ

ونؤمن بملك الموت الموكل بقبض أرواح العالمين

We believe in the Angel of Death who has been appointed to take the souls of (the inhabitants of) all the worlds[109].

وبعذاب القبر لمن كان له أهلا ، وسؤال منكر ونكير في قبره عن ربه ودينه ونبيه على ما جاءت به الأخبار عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وعن الصحابة رضوان الله عليهم

(We believe) in the punishment of the grave for those who deserve it[110], and in the questioning in the grave by *Munkar* and *Nakīr* about

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For each (such person) there are attendants (angels), before and behind him: they guard him by the command of Allah.

[Sūra al-Raʿd 11]

[109] Allah Taʿālā tells us in the Qurʾān:

قُلْ يَتَوَفَّىٰكُم مَّلَكُ ٱلْمَوْتِ ٱلَّذِى وُكِّلَ بِكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ

Say: the Angel of Death, put in charge of you, will (duly) take your souls: then you shall be brought back to your Lord.

[Sūra al-Sajda 11]

[110] Punishment in the grave is proven from various verses of the Qurʾān as well as many *aḥādīth*. Our not being able to perceive it does not warrant its

denial. Like all other possible occurrences, it is our duty to believe in them if they are transmitted to us by a reliable source such as the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth.

This punishment will be meted out to both the body and the spirit after Allah's having created some degree of life in the body so that it can experience pain. It is not necessary that the spirit be returned to the body for this to happen. The punishment will be meted out to all those who deserve it after they die even if they are not buried in a grave e.g. those that are cremated. The effect of this punishment will also be felt by the spirit due to its connection to the body.

The Qurʾān states:

وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُم مِّنَ ٱلْعَذَابِ ٱلْأَدْنَىٰ دُونَ ٱلْعَذَابِ ٱلْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

And indeed We will make them taste of the lesser punishment prior to the greater punishment, in order that they may (repent and) return.

[Sūra al-Sajdah 21]

ٱلنَّارُ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَعَشِيًّا ۖ وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ ٱلسَّاعَةُ أَدْخِلُوٓا۟ ءَالَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ ٱلْعَذَابِ

They are brought before the Fire morning and evening. On the Day the Hour comes, it will be said, 'Throw Pharaoh's people into the worst torment'.

[Sūra Ghāfir 46]

The Prophet ﷺ is recorded to have said as part of a lengthy ḥadīth:

أوحي إلي أنكم تفتنون في قبوركم مثل أو قريبا من فتنة الدجال

It has indeed been inspired to me that you will be put to trials in your graves and these trials will be like the trials of Dajjal or nearly like it.

[al-Bukhāri]

Zayd ibn Thābit ﷺ narrated: Once whilst Allah's Messenger ﷺ was going with us towards the dwellings of Banī al-Najjār, riding upon his pony, it swayed and he nearly fall. Suddenly he saw before him five or six graves. He said: Who amongst you knows about those lying in these graves?
A person said: I.
Thereupon the Prophet ﷺ said: In what state did they die?
He said: They died as polytheists.
He said: These people are passing through the ordeal in the graves. If it were not for the fear that you will stop burying your dead I would have sought from Allah that He makes you listen to that which I am listening to.

[Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim]

It is recorded that ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān ﷺ used to cry so profusely when standing beside the grave that his beard would become wet.
When it was asked of him: "Why is it that when Paradise and Hell are mentioned you do not cry but when the grave is mentioned you cry?" He

one's Lord, one's religion and one's Prophet[111], as has come down in narrations from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and

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replied: “I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying: ‘The grave is the first of the stages of the hereafter. If a person successfully passes that stage then the stages that follow will be easy. If he does not pass that stage the stages after it will be much more difficult for him.”

[Tirmidhī]

[111] Anas bin Mālik ؓ narrated: Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "When a person is placed in his grave and his companions begin to leave whilst he can still hear their footsteps, two angels come to him, make him sit and ask him, 'What did you say about this man (i.e. Muḥammad ﷺ)?'
The faithful believer will say, 'I testify that he is Allah's slave and His Messenger.'
Then they will say to him, 'Look at your place in the Hell Fire; Allah has given you a place in Paradise instead of it.'
He will then see both his places.
On the other hand when a hypocrite or a disbeliever will be questioned he will reply, "I do not know. I used to say what people used to say."
The angels will say to him, "Neither did you know nor did you take lesson (by reciting the Qur ān)." Then he will be beaten with an iron hammer which will cause him to send out a cry that will be heard by everything around him, except Jinn and human beings.

[Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri]

grant him peace, and (in reports) from the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all.

والقبر روضة من رياض الجنة أو حفرة من حفر النيران

The grave is either one of the gardens of Paradise or one of the pits of the Fire.

ونؤمن بالبعث وجزاء الأعمال يوم القيامة والعرض والحساب وقراءة الكتاب والثواب والعقاب والصراط والميزان

We believe in the Resurrection[112] and the Recompense of deeds on the Day of Judgement[113], and (we believe in) the Presentation[114], the

[112] Resurrection refers to the raising to life of all creatures on the Day of Resurrection (*Yawm al-Qiyāma*) in order to recompense them for the deeds they carried out in the world. In addition to its being clearly proven in the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth, it is a belief that was common to the message propagated by all previous prophets and messengers and is recorded in all heavenly books that were revealed. It is therefore regarded to be one of the essentials of the Islamic creed, rejection of which is outright disbelief (*kufr.*)

The Qurʾān is explicit on the physical nature of this resurrection to an extent that leaves no room for figurative interpretation.

وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُۥ ۖ قَالَ مَن يُحْيِ ٱلْعِظَـٰمَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ ﴿٧٨﴾ قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا
ٱلَّذِىٓ أَنشَأَهَآ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ۖ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ

He produces arguments against Us, forgetting his own creation. He says, 'Who can give life back to bones after they have decayed'? Say, 'He who created them in the first place will give them life again: He has full knowledge of every act of creation.'

[Sūra Yā-Sīn 78-79]

وَنُفِخَ فِى ٱلصُّورِ فَإِذَا هُم مِّنَ ٱلْأَجْدَاثِ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَنسِلُونَ

The Trumpet will be sounded and- lo and behold!- they will rush out to their Lord from their graves.

[Sūra Yā-Sīn 51]

وَقَالُوٓا۟ أَءِذَا كُنَّا عِظَـٰمًا وَرُفَـٰتًا أَءِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ خَلْقًا جَدِيدًا ﴿٤٩﴾
۞ قُلْ كُونُوا۟ حِجَارَةً أَوْ حَدِيدًا ﴿٥٠﴾ أَوْ خَلْقًا مِّمَّا يَكْبُرُ فِى صُدُورِكُمْ ۚ
فَسَيَقُولُونَ مَن يُعِيدُنَا ۖ قُلِ ٱلَّذِى فَطَرَكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ

They also say, 'What? When we are turned to bones and dust, shall we really be raised up in a new act of creation'? Say, '[Yes] even if you were [as hard as] stone, or iron, or any other substance you think hard to bring to life.'

Then they will say, 'Who will bring us back?' Say, 'The One who created you the first time.'

[Sūra al-Isrāʾ 49-51]

113 The world is not the appropriate place for recompense as it is the place of trial. The basis of this trial is belief in the unseen by taking lesson from the signs evident in the creation. The Qurʾān says:

ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ ٱلْمَوْتَ وَٱلْحَيَوٰةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلاً ۚ

The One who created death and life to test you [people] and reveal which of you does best.

[Sūra al-Mulk 2]

The recompense for the choice that man makes in this world will be given to him in the hereafter. The Qurʾān says:

ٱصْلَوْهَا فَٱصْبِرُوٓاْ أَوْ لَا تَصْبِرُواْ سَوَآءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ إِنَّمَا تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

Burn in it—it makes no difference whether you bear it patiently or not— you are only being repaid for what you have done.

[Sūra al-Ṭūr 16]

114 The Qurʾān says:

وَعُرِضُواْ عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ صَفًّا

And they shall be presented before your Lord in ranks

Reckoning[115], the Reading of the book (of deeds)[116], Reward and Punishment, the Bridge[117] and the Balance[118].

[Sūra al-Kahf 48]

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُونَ لَا تَخْفَىٰ مِنكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ

On that Day you will be presented (for judgement) and none of your secrets will remain hidden.

[Sūra al-Ḥāqqa 18]

115 The Qurʾān says:

وَإِن كَانَ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِّنْ خَرْدَلٍ أَتَيْنَا بِهَا ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِنَا حَاسِبِينَ

And if there should be even the weight of a mustard seed, We shall bring it out- We take excellent account.

[Sūra al-Anbiyāʾ 47]

116 The Qurʾān says:

وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُۥ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ كِتَٰبًا يَلْقَىٰهُ مَنشُورًا ﴿١٣﴾ ٱقْرَأْ كِتَٰبَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ ٱلْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا

We shall bring out a record for each of them, which they will find spread wide open, 'Read your record. Today your own soul is enough to calculate your account.'

[Sūra al-Isrāʾ 13-14]

وَوُضِعَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبُ فَتَرَى ٱلۡمُجۡرِمِينَ مُشۡفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يَٰوَيۡلَتَنَا مَالِ هَٰذَا
ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّآ أَحۡصَىٰهَاۚ وَوَجَدُواْ مَا عَمِلُواْ حَاضِرًاۗ
وَلَا يَظۡلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا

The record of their deeds will be laid open and you will see the guilty, dismayed at what they contain, saying, 'Woe to us! What a record this is! It does not leave any deed, small or large, unaccounted for!' They will find everything they ever did laid in front of them: your Lord will not be unjust to anyone.

[Sūra al-Kahf 4٩]

The believer will be given his record in his right hand as a symbol of success whilst the disbeliever will be given his record in his left hand or behind his back as a sign of failure.

فَأَمَّا مَنۡ أُوتِيَ كِتَٰبَهُۥ بِيَمِينِهِۦ ﴿٧﴾ فَسَوۡفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا ﴿٨﴾ وَيَنقَلِبُ
إِلَىٰٓ أَهۡلِهِۦ مَسۡرُورًا ﴿٩﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنۡ أُوتِيَ كِتَٰبَهُۥ وَرَآءَ ظَهۡرِهِۦ ﴿١٠﴾ فَسَوۡفَ
يَدۡعُواْ ثُبُورًا ﴿١١﴾ وَيَصۡلَىٰ سَعِيرًا

Whoever is given his record in his right hand will have an easy and return to his people well pleased, but whoever is given his record from behind his back will cry out for destruction—he will burn in the blazing Fire.

[Sūra al-Inshiqāq 7-11]

[117] The *Ṣirāṭ* is a bridge over Hell that is sharper than the blade of a sword and thinner than a strand of hair. Every person will have to pass over this bridge as mentioned in the verse:

وَإِن مِّنكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا ۚ كَانَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَّقْضِيًّا ﴿٧١﴾ ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّقَوا۟ وَّنَذَرُ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ فِيهَا جِثِيًّا

Every single one of you will approach it, a decree from your Lord which must be fulfilled. We shall save the devout and leave the evildoers there on their knees.

[Sūra Maryam 71-72]

[118] The *Mīzān* refers to the instrument that will be used to measure the deeds of man on the Day of Judgement. The precise details of how this measurement will occur is unknown to us. We know and believe what the Qurʾān tells us:

وَٱلْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ ٱلْحَقُّ ۚ فَمَن ثَقُلَتْ مَوَٰزِينُهُۥ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُفْلِحُونَ

On that Day the weighing of deeds will be true and just: those whose good deeds are heavy on the scales will be the ones to prosper.

[Sūra al-Aʿrāf 8]

والجنة والنار مخلوقتان لا تفنيان أبدا ولا تبيدان ، وأن الله تعالى خلق الجنة
والنار قبل الخلق وخلق لهما أهلا ، فمن شاء منهم إلى الجنة فضلا منه ،
ومن شاء منهم إلى النار عدلا منه ، وكل يعمل لما قد فرغ له
وصائر الى ما خلق له

(We believe that) the Garden and the Fire are (already) created[119] and will never come to an end nor perish[120]. We believe that Allah

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وَنَضَعُ ٱلۡمَوَٰزِينَ ٱلۡقِسۡطَ لِيَوۡمِ ٱلۡقِيَٰمَةِ

We will set up scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection

[Sūra al-Anbiyāʾ 47]

[119] The belief of the *Ahl al-Sunna* is that Paradise (Jannah) and the Fire (of Jahannam) have already been created. This is based on evidence from the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth. The story of the Prophet Adam ﷺ, his wife Ḥawwāʾ and their term of residence in Jannah is clear proof of this. In addition numerous verses of the Qurʾān refer to the creation of Jannah and Jahannam using the past tense verb e.g.

وَسَارِعُوٓاْ إِلَىٰ مَغۡفِرَةٖ مِّن رَّبِّكُمۡ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرۡضُهَا ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتُ وَٱلۡأَرۡضُ
أُعِدَّتۡ لِلۡمُتَّقِينَ

*Hurry towards your Lord's forgiveness and a Garden as wide as the heavens and earth **prepared** for the righteous.*

[Sūra Āl-ʿImrān 133]

وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱلنَّارَ ٱلَّتِىٓ أُعِدَّتۡ لِلۡكَـٰفِرِينَ

*Beware of the Fire **prepared** for those who disbelieve.*

[Sūra Āl-ʿImrān 131]

In a ḥadīth it is recorded:

لما خلق الله الجنة والنار أرسل جبريل عليه السلام إلى الجنة فقال انظر إليها وإلى ما أعددت لأهلها فيها فنظر إليها فرجع فقال وعزتك لا يسمع بها أحد إلا دخلها فأمر بها فحفت بالمكاره فقال اذهب إليها فانظر إليها وإلى ما أعددت لأهلها فيها فنظر إليها فإذا هي قد حفت بالمكاره فقال وعزتك لقد خشيت أن لا يدخلها أحد قال اذهب فانظر إلى النار وإلى ما أعددت لأهلها فيها فنظر إليها فإذا هي يركب بعضها بعضا فرجع فقال وعزتك لا يدخلها أحد فأمر بها فحفت بالشهوات فقال ارجع فانظر إليها فنظر إليها فإذا هي قد حفت بالشهوات فرجع وقال وعزتك لقد خشيت أن لا ينجو منها أحد إلا دخلها

When Allah created Paradise and Hell-fire, He sent Jibrīl (Gabriel) to Paradise, saying: 'Look at it and at what I have prepared therein for its inhabitants.' The Prophet ﷺ said: 'So he came to it and looked at it and at

what Allah had prepared therein for its inhabitants.' The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Then he (Jibrīl) returned to Him and said: 'By your glory, no one will hear of it except that he will enter it.' So He ordered that it be surrounded by forms of hardship, and He said: 'Return to it and look at what I have prepared therein for its inhabitants.'' The Prophet ﷺ said: 'So he returned to it and found that it was surrounded by forms of hardship. Then he returned to Him and said: 'By Your glory, I fear that no one will enter it.' He said: 'Go to Hell-fire and look at it and what I have prepared therein for its inhabitants,' and he found that it was in layers, one above the other. Then he returned to Him and said: 'By Your glory, no one who hears of it will enter it.' So He ordered that it be encompassed by lusts. Then He said: 'Return to it.' And he returned to it and said: 'By Your glory, I am afraid that no one will be saved from entering it'.

[Abu Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, Nasāʾī, Aḥmad]

The Muʿtazila sect held the erroneous belief that Paradise and Hell will only be created after the Day of Resurrection.

120 The belief of the *Ahl al-Sunna* is that both Paradise and Hell-fire will never perish and will be kept eternal by Allah's decree. An invalid view of their ceasing to exist was held by Jahm ibn Ṣafwān, the founder of the Muʿaṭṭila sect.

The Qurʾān tells us about Paradise:

جَزَآؤُهُمۡ عِندَ رَبِّهِمۡ جَنَّٰتُ عَدۡنٖ تَجۡرِي مِن تَحۡتِهَا ٱلۡأَنۡهَٰرُ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَآ أَبَدٗا

created them before the rest of creation and then created inhabitants for each of them[121]. Whoever He wills goes to the Garden out of His

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Their reward with their Lord is everlasting Gardens graced with flowing streams, where they will remain forever.

[Sūra al-Bayyina 8]

Likewise the Qurʾān says about the Fire:

بَلَىٰ مَن كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِۦ خَطِيٓـَٔتُهُۥ فَأُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَـٰبُ ٱلنَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَـٰلِدُونَ

Truly those who do evil and are surrounded by their sins will be the inhabitants of the Fire, there to remain forever.

[Sūra al-Baqara 81]

[121] It is reported from ʿĀʾisha ﵂:

توفي صبي فقلتُ طوبى له عصفور من عصافير الجنة ، فقال رسول الله ﷺ أو لا تدرين أن الله خلق الجنة وخلق النار ، فخلق لهذه أهلا ولهذه أهلا

A child passed away and I remarked: Glad tidings for him, a bird of Paradise! The Prophet ﷺ said: Don’t you know that Allah created Paradise and Hell-fire and created inhabitants for each of them?

[Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim]

Bounty[122] and whoever He wills goes to the Fire through His justice[123]. Everyone acts in accordance with what was destined for him and goes towards what he has been created for.

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[122] Entrance into Paradise will be granted by Allah through his bounty. A person's action does not make it necessary on Allah to grant Him Paradise as Allah is not obligated by anything. The Prophet ﷺ said:

لن ينجي أحدا منكم عمله قال رجل ولا إياك يا رسول الله قال ولا إياي إلا أن يتغمدني الله منه برحمة

No one's actions from amongst you will give him salvation. A person enquired: Not even you, O Messenger of Allah? The Prophet ﷺ replied: Not even me, except if Allah encompasses me with (His) mercy.

[Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim]

The Qurʾān says:

سَابِقُوٓاْ إِلَىٰ مَغۡفِرَةٖ مِّن رَّبِّكُمۡ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرۡضُهَا كَعَرۡضِ ٱلسَّمَآءِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ أُعِدَّتۡ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ بِٱللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِۦۚ ذَٰلِكَ فَضۡلُ ٱللَّهِ يُؤۡتِيهِ مَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ ذُو ٱلۡفَضۡلِ ٱلۡعَظِيمِ

So race for your Lord's forgiveness and a Garden as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for those who believe in Allah and His messengers: that

والخير والشر مقدران على العباد

Good and evil are both decreed for man[124].

والاستطاعة التي يجب بها الفعل من نحو التوفيق الذي لا يجوز أن يوصف المخلوق به فهي مع الفعل ، وأما الاستطاعة من جهة الصحة والوسع والتمكن وسلامة الآلات فهي قبل الفعل، وبها يتعلق الخطاب ، وهي كما قالَ تعالى ﴿ لَا يُكَلِّفُ ٱللَّهُ نَفۡسًا إِلَّا وُسۡعَهَا ﴾

Capability[125] in terms of *Tawfīq* (Divine Grace and Favour) which makes an action occur cannot be ascribed to a created being. This

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is Allah's bounty, which He bestows on whoever He pleases. Allah's bounty is infinite.

[Sūra al-Ḥadīd 21]

123 Having been commanded to believe by choice and having been informed of the punishment for not doing so, man's entrance into Hell-fire is within the parameters of the justice and wisdom of Allah.

124 Refer to the previous sections on *Qadar* (Pre-destination)

capability is integral with the action. On the other hand capability of an action in terms of having the necessary health, ability, being in a position to act and having the necessary means exists in a person before the action. It is this type of capability which is the object of the directives of Sharīʿa. Allah the Exalted says: "Allah does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability.[126]"

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[125] *Istiṭāʿa* (Capability) has two meanings: The first is that which is coupled with action and is the creating (by Allah) of every part of the action as it occurs. This is called *Tawfīq*, when coupled with good deeds, and is not the act of the creation but that of the Creator Himself. It reflects man's dependence on Allah to carry out any deed.

Taklīf (i.e. the imposition of the laws of Sharīʿa) is not based on this type of capability as it is not within the power of man.

The second meaning of capability is man's potential in terms of having the necessary means, soundness of body and limbs etc. to carry out the action. This is found in a person before the action and is the basis for *Taklīf*.

[126] Allah, Most High, says:

﴿ لَا يُكَلِّفُ ٱللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ﴾

Allah does not charge any soul except that which it can bear

[Sūra al-Baqara 286]

وأفعال العباد خلق الله وكسب من العباد

Man's actions are the creation of Allah acquired by man[127].

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[127] There is only one Creator – Allah - and He has created everything, including man's actions.

وَٱللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمۡ وَمَا تَعۡمَلُونَ

Allah has created you and what you do.

[Sūra al-Ṣāffāt 96]

The *Kasb* (acquisition) of an action is performed by man. When man firmly resolves to do something Allah Taʿālā creates that action for him – be it good or bad. Thus the earning of the action is by man's volition and forms the basis of his receiving reward or punishment.

The *Jabariyya* sect claim that man has no choice in any action and all actions are done by Allah. Man's actions according to them are involuntary - like a stone being turned by some person from side to side or a leaf being blown by the wind. On the other extreme the Muʿtazila and Qadariyya claim that man creates his own actions.

The *Ahl al-Sunna* hold that the Creator of all actions is Allah. Man is the acquirer or doer of his own actions with intent.

و لم يكلفهم الله تعالى إلا ما يطيقون ، ولا يطيقون إلا ما كلفهم ، وهو تفسير لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله نقول لا حيلة لأحد ولا حركة لأحد ولا تحول لأحد عن معصية الله إلا بمعونة الله ، ولا قوة لأحد على إقامة طاعة الله والثبات عليها إلا بتوفيق الله

Allah, the Exalted, has only imposed on man what he is able to do[128] and man is only able to do what Allah has granted him ability to do. This is the explanation of the phrase: 'There is no power and no might except by Allah.' We are saying that there is no strategy or way by which anyone can avoid or escape the disobedience of Allah except with Allah's help; nor does anyone have the strength to put obedience

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128 Allah, Most High, says:

﴿ لَا يُكَلِّفُ ٱللَّهُ نَفۡسًا إِلَّا وُسۡعَهَا ﴾

Allah does not charge any soul except that which it can bear

[Sūra al-Baqara 286]

It is against *hikmah* (wisdom) to burden anyone with a task beyond his capabilities. Thus it is not possible that Allah, the All-Wise does so. Whatever we have been commanded to do is within our capabilities and can only be done with the ability granted to us by Allah Himself.

of Allah into practice and remain firm on it, except if Allah makes it possible for him to do so[129].

وكل شيء يجري بمشيئة الله تعالى وعلمه وقضائه وقدره ، غلبت مشيئته المشيئات كلها، وغلب قضاؤه الحيل كلها ، يفعل ما يشاء وهو غير ظالم أبدا ، تقدس عن كل سوء وحين ، وتنزه عن كل عيب وشين ﴿ لَا يُسْئَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْئَلُونَ ﴾

Everything occurs in accordance with Allah's Will, Knowledge, Predestination and Decree. His Will overpowers all other wills[130] and His Decree overpowers all strategems. He does whatever He wills and He is never unjust[131]. He is Pure from every evil or perdition and

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129 Man is in need of Allah at every moment. It is only Allah that protects man from sin and enables him to perform good deeds.

130 This is a refutation of the false belief of the Muʿtazila that Allah willed belief for every disbeliever, but the disbeliever's will of disbelief occurred in opposition to the will of Allah.

131 None of Allah's actions can be described as being unjust as injustice is to interfere in the possession of another – whereas the entire creation is possessed by Allah alone. Injustice is also defined as doing something

He is perfect far beyond any fault or flaw. *"He (Allah) will not be asked about what He does but they (man) will be asked.*[132] *"*

وفي دعاء الأحياء وصدقاتهم منفعة للأموات

In the supplication and charity of those alive there is benefit for those that have passed away[133].

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inappropriately. No action of Allah can be deemed inappropriate even though we may not recognize the wisdom behind that action.

[132] Man will be questioned about his actions as mentioned in a ḥadīth:

لا تزول قدما عبد يوم القيامة حتى يسأل عن أربع : عن عمره فيما أفناه وعن علمه ماذا عمل فيه وعن ماله من أين اكتسبه وفيما أنفقه وعن جسمه فيما أبلاه

Man's feet will not move on the Day of Judgement until he is questioned about four (things): His life, how he spent it, his knowledge, how he acted upon it, his wealth, how he earned it and how he spent it and his body, how he used it.

[Tirmidhī]

[133] This is in refutation of the belief held by the Muʿtazila that the actions of the living are of no benefit to the dead. The Qurʾān praises those who pray and seek forgiveness for those that have preceded them:

وَٱلَّذِينَ جَآءُو مِنۢ بَعۡدِهِمۡ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا ٱغۡفِرۡ لَنَا وَلِإِخۡوَٰنِنَا ٱلَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِٱلۡإِيمَٰنِ وَلَا تَجۡعَلۡ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلّٗا لِّلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ رَبَّنَآ إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٞ رَّحِيمٌ

Those who came after them say, 'Lord, forgive us our sins and the sins of our brothers who believed before us, and leave no malice in our hearts towards those who believe. Lord, You are truly compassionate and merciful.

[Sūra al-Ḥashr 10]

The unanimously agreed practice of the Prophet ﷺ, the Ṣaḥāba and Tābiʿīn of offering the funeral prayer (*Ṣalāh al-Janāza*) for those that have passed away is proof that this is of benefit to them. The Sharīʿa requires us to offer this Ṣalāh for every Muslim who passes away which is essentially a prayer for that person.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

ما من ميت يصلي عليه أمة من المسلمين يبلغون مائة كلهم يشفعون له إلا شفعوا فيه

If a person passes away and a group of hundred Muslims, all interceding for the deceased person offer *Ṣalah al-Janāza* for him their intercession is accepted."

[Musnad Aḥmad, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim]

It is also narrated that Saʿd ibn ʿUbāda ﷺ enquired from the Prophet ﷺ as to which charity he should give on behalf of his deceased mother. The Prophet

والله تعالى يستجيب الدعوات ويقضي الحاجات

Allah, Most High, responds to supplications and fulfils needs[134].

ﷺ replied: "Water." Upon this Saʿd ibn ʿUbāda dug a well on behalf of his mother.

[Musnad Aḥmad, Nasāʾī]

[134] When a person turns to Allah, with sincerity and pure devotion then Allah Taʿālā answers His call and removes his difficulty. It is incorrect to claim that *duʿāʾ* (supplication) has no effect. Allah Himself has commanded us in the Qurʾān to supplicate to Him and has promised to respond:

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمُ ٱدۡعُونِيٓ أَسۡتَجِبۡ لَكُمۡ

Call unto me and I will respond to you.

[Sūra al-Muʾmin 60]

The Prophet ﷺ said:

يستجاب لأحدكم ما لم يعجل فيقول قد دعوت ربي فلم يستجب لي

A person's supplications are responded to as long he is not hasty i.e. he says 'I have called unto my Lord but he has not responded to me'

[Muslim, Bukhārī]

ويملك كل شيء ولا يملكه شيء ، ولا غنى عن الله تعالى طرفة عين ، ومن استغنى عن الله طرفة عين فقد كفر وصار من أهل الحين

Allah has absolute control over everything and nothing has any control over Him. Nothing can be independent of Allah even for the blinking of an eye. Whoever considers himself independent of Allah for the blinking of an eye commits disbelief and becomes one of the people of ruin[135].

والله يغضب ويرضى لا كأحد من الورى

Allah is 'angered' and 'pleased' but not in the same way as any creature[136].

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135 The Qurʾān tells us:

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ أَنتُمُ ٱلْفُقَرَآءُ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ هُوَ ٱلْغَنِىُّ ٱلْحَمِيدُ

O People, it is you who stand in need of Allah. Allah needs nothing and is worthy of all praise.

[Sūra Fāṭir 15]

136 We believe in every description of Allah related to us in the Qurʾān or Ḥadīth in the meaning intended by Allah as befitting His Majesty. His qualities are unique and unlike that of created beings.

The Qurʾān tells us:

لَيۡسَ كَمِثۡلِهِۦ شَيۡءٞۖ وَهُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلۡبَصِيرُ

"*And there is none like unto Him. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.*"

[Sūra Al-Shūrā 11]

Anger, pleasure, love, mercy etc. in relation to created beings are emotions that are accompanied by physical changes of temperature, pressure etc. in the human body. This meaning obviously cannot apply to Allah since His timelessness eliminates the possibility of any change overcoming Him.

Thus the meaning of *ghaḍab* (literally: anger) and *riḍā* (lit. pleasure) for Allah is not the same as that in relation to human beings. The knowledge of what is meant by these terms is consigned to Allah. This approach is called *Tafwīḍ* and was the way of the earlier scholars (*Salaf*) and is considered the safest treatment of these expressions.

Later scholars (*Khalaf*) permitted the use of appropriate interpretations (*Taʾwīl*) when explaining these verses and narrations in order to preserve the faith of the general masses who were otherwise prone to taking these literally.

ونحب أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ، ولا نفرط في حب أحد منهم ، ولا نتبرأ من أحد منهم ، ونبغض من يبغضهم وبغير الخير يذكرهم ، ولا نذكرهم إلا بخير وحبهم دين وإيمان وإحسان وبغضهم كفر ونفاق وطغيان

We love the companions[137] of the Messenger of Allah, May Allah bless him and give him peace, but we do not commit excess in our

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[137] A *Ṣaḥābī* (pl. *Ṣaḥāba*) as defined by ibn Ḥajar, in his book *al-Iṣāba*, is a person who met the Prophet ﷺ as a believer and thereafter passed away as a Muslim. We have been instructed in numerous verses of the Qurʾān and narrations of the Prophet ﷺ to love and show respect for the *Ṣaḥāba* as Allah is pleased with them. Their sacrifice for the sake of Islam and its upliftment, their support for the Prophet ﷺ throughout his mission and their sincere devotion in preserving and propagating his teachings makes it binding on every true believer to honour and love them.

The Qurʾān tells us :

وَٱلسَّٰبِقُونَ ٱلْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ ٱلْمُهَٰجِرِينَ وَٱلْأَنصَارِ وَٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّبَعُوهُم بِإِحْسَٰنٍ رَّضِىَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا۟ عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرِى تَحْتَهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَآ أَبَدًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ ٱلْفَوْزُ ٱلْعَظِيمُ

Allah is well pleased with the first emigrants and helpers and those who followed them in good deeds, and they are well pleased with Him: He has prepared Gardens graced with flowing streams for them, there to remain for ever. That is the supreme triumph.

[Sūra al-Tawba 100]

Allah, Most High, has praised them in the *Tawrāh, Injīl and* Qurʾān:

مُّحَمَّدٞ رَّسُولُ ٱللَّهِۚ وَٱلَّذِينَ مَعَهُۥٓ أَشِدَّآءُ عَلَى ٱلۡكُفَّارِ رُحَمَآءُ بَيۡنَهُمۡۖ تَرَىٰهُمۡ رُكَّعٗا
سُجَّدٗا يَبۡتَغُونَ فَضۡلٗا مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ وَرِضۡوَٰنٗاۖ سِيمَاهُمۡ فِي وُجُوهِهِم مِّنۡ أَثَرِ ٱلسُّجُودِۚ
ذَٰلِكَ مَثَلُهُمۡ فِي ٱلتَّوۡرَىٰةِۚ وَمَثَلُهُمۡ فِي ٱلۡإِنجِيلِ كَزَرۡعٍ أَخۡرَجَ شَطۡـَٔهُۥ فَـَٔازَرَهُۥ
فَٱسۡتَغۡلَظَ فَٱسۡتَوَىٰ عَلَىٰ سُوقِهِۦ يُعۡجِبُ ٱلزُّرَّاعَ لِيَغِيظَ بِهِمُ ٱلۡكُفَّارَۗ وَعَدَ ٱللَّهُ
ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ مِنۡهُم مَّغۡفِرَةٗ وَأَجۡرًا عَظِيمَۢا

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. Those who follow him are harsh towards the disbelievers and compassionate towards each other. You see them kneeling and prostrating, seeking Allah's bounty and His good pleasure: on their faces they bear the marks of their prostrations. This is how they are pictured in the Torah and the Gospel: like a seed that puts forth its shoot, becomes strong, grows thick, and rises on its stem to the delight of its sowers. So Allah infuriates the disbelievers through them; Allah promises forgiveness and a great reward to those who believe and do righteous deeds.

[Sūra al-Fatḥ 29]

The Prophet ﷺ has also praised the *Ṣaḥāba* and instructed us to love them and not show enmity or insult them. He ﷺ said:

خير الناس قرني ثم الذين يلونهم

The best of people is my generation and thereafter those that follow them.

[Bukhārī, Muslim]

He ﷺ also said:

الله الله في أصحابي لا تتخذوهم غرضا بعدي فمن أحبهم فبحبي أحبهم ومن أبغضهم فببغضي أبغضهم ومن آذاهم فقد آذاني ومن آذاني فقد آذى الله ومن آذى الله يوشك أن يأخذه

Fear Allah, fear Allah with regards to my companions. Do not make them targets (of your criticism) after me. Whoever loves them he would love them on account of his love for me and whoever shows enmity towards them would do so on account of his being an enemy to me. Whoever insults them has insulted me and whoever insults me has insulted Allah. Whoever insults Allah, will soon be siezed by Him.

[Tirmidhī, Aḥmad]

love for any one of them nor do we disown any one of them[138]. We hate anyone who hates them or does not speak well of them and we only speak well of them[139]. Love for them is religion, belief and piety whilst hatred for them is disbelief, hypocrisy and transgression.

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138 Excess in the love of any one is an extremist tendency within religion that leads to distortion. The Christians committed excess in their love for the Prophet ʿĪsā (Jesus) ﷺ raising him to the rank of divinity. Likwise the extreme Shīʿite Rāfiḍa sect commit excess in the love of ʿAlī ﷺ to the extent that some Shīʿite sects claim divinity for him whilst others believe that the angel Jibrīl ﷺ had erred in his carrying the message to the Prophet ﷺ instead of ʿAlī ﷺ. This excess led to their hurling of abuse at other companions of the Prophet ﷺ like Abū Bakr ﷺ, ʿUmar ﷺ and ʿUthmān ﷺ and regarding almost all of them to have reneged after the demise of the Prophet ﷺ.

The Prophet ﷺ had predicted this and is reported to have said to ʿAlī ﷺ :

يهلك فيك اثنان محب مفرط و مبغض مفرط

Two types of people will be ruined with regards to you: One that commits excess in your love; and one that commits excess in your enmity.

[Nasāʾī, Aḥmad]

139 We do not habour malice or hatred for any companion of the Prophet ﷺ. We also do not say anything about the differences that occurred between them on account of their conflicting personal judgements (*Ijtihād*) regarding certain matters. Instead we submit an appropriate interpretation to any authentic report about such incidents. This is because Allah himself has

ونثبت الخلافة بعد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أولا لأبي بكر الصديق رضي الله عنه ، تفضيلا له وتقديما على جميع الأمة ، ثم لعمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه ، ثم لعثمان بن عفان رضي الله عنه ، ثم لعلي بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه وهم الخلفاء الراشدون والأئمة المهتدون

We confirm that, after the death of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, the caliphate went first to Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq[140], may Allah be pleased with him, thus proving his

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praised them and the Prophet ﷺ has warned us about making them the target of our criticism (as discussed above.)

[140] His name was ʿAbdullāh ibn Abī Quḥāfa. He was given the title of *Al-Ṣiddīq* (The Truthful) by the Prophet ﷺ due to his forthright acceptance of the message of Prophethood (*risāla*) and the incident of *Miʿrāj.*

The caliphate of Abū Bakr ؓ was confirmed by the consensus of all the companions at *Saqīfa Banū Sāʿida* immediately after the demise of the Prophet ﷺ .

ʿAlī ؓ, although delayed at first due to his being involved in arranging the burial of the Prophet ﷺ, also publicly pledged his allegiance to Abū Bakr ؓ a

excellence and superiority over the rest of the Ummah; then to ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb[141], may Allah be pleased with him; then to ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān[142], may Allah be pleased with him; and then to ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib[143], may Allah be pleased with him. These are the upright caliphs and rightly-guided leaders[144].

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short while later.

141 ʿUmar's ﷻ appointment to the caliphate was by the directive of Abū Bakr ﷻ prior to his demise.

142 After ʿUmar was injured by the stab wound that later proved fatal, he appointed a six-man council comprising ʿUthmān, ʿAlī, Ṭalḥa, Zubayr, ʿAbdur Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf and Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, may Allah be pleased with all of them. The duty of this council was to elect a caliph from amongst them. It was by the unanimity of this council that ʿUthmān ﷻ was elected caliph.

143 After the martyrdom of ʿUthmān ﷻ the senior *Muhājirīn* (Emigrant *Ṣaḥāba*) and *Anṣār* (Resident *Ṣaḥāba*) selected ʿAlī ﷻ as the most suitable candidate for the caliphate.

144 The Prophet ﷺ said:

عليكم بسنتي وسنة الخلفاء الراشدين المهديين من بعدي

Hold firm onto my way and the way of the upright rightly-guided caliphs after me.

[Abū Dāwūd]

وإن العشرة الذين سماهم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وبشرهم بالجنة ، نشهد لهم بالجنة على ما شهد لهم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ، وقوله الحق ، وهم أبو بكر وعمر وعثمان وعلي وطلحة والزبير وسعد وسعيد وعبد الرحمن بن عوف وأبو عبيدة بن الجراح وهو أمين هذه الأمة رضي الله عنهم أجمعين

We testify that the ten whom the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, named and gave glad tidings of their being in Paradise, will be in Paradise, as the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, whose word is truth, testified that they would be. They are Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, ʿAlī, Ṭalḥa, Zubayr, Saʿd, Saʿīd, ʿAbdur Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf and Abū ʿUbayda ibn al-Jarrāḥ who was the 'Trustee of this Ummah[145]', may Allah be pleased with all of them.

After the demise of ʿAlī ﷺ the period of the rightly-guided caliphate ended as was prophecized by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

الخلافة بعدي ثلاثون سنة

The caliphate after me will span thirty years.

[Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī]

[145] In a hadith the Prophet ﷺ said:

ومن أحسن القول في أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وأزواجه الطاهرات من كل دنس وذرياته المقدسين من كل رجس فقد برئ من النفاق

Anyone who speaks well of the companions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and his wives and offspring, who are all pure and untainted by any impurity, is free from hypocrisy.

وعلماء السلف من السابقين ومن بعدهم من التابعين أهل الخير والأثر ، وأهل الفقه والنظر ، لا يذكرون إلا بالجميل ومن ذكرهم بسوء فهو على غير السبيل

The right-acting learned men of the *Salaf* (first generation) and those who followed after them, the people of virtue, the narrators of the

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إن لكل أمة أمينا وإن أمين هذه الأمة أبو عبيدة بن الجراح

Every *Ummah* (community) has a trustee and the trustee of this *Ummah* is Abū ʿUbayda ibn al-Jarrāḥ.

[Bukhārī, Muslim]

aḥādīth, the jurists and analysts - are only spoken about in the best way and anyone who speaks ill of them is not on the right path[146].

ولا نفضل أحدا من الأولياء على أحد من الأنبياء عليهم السلام ، ونقول نبي واحد أفضل من جميع الأولياء

We do not give virtue to any of the saintly men (*awliyāʾ*) over any of the Prophets but rather we believe that any one Prophet is better than all the *awliyāʾ* put together[147].

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[146] Respect and love for these men of the *Ummah* is in fact respect and love for religion and in turn for the Prophet ﷺ as the *ʿUlamāʾ* (scholars) are the successors of the Prophets and the noble carriers of the *Sharīʿa* (Sacred Law). It is therefore obligatory to praise them, follow their teachings and abstain from speaking ill of them.

[147] A *walī* is a man of piety who adheres strictly to the *Sharīʿa* and the way (Sunna) of one of the prophets. The rank of a prophet is far superior to that of a *walī* as every prophet in addition to his being a prophet also enjoys the rank of *wilāya.*

No *walī* can ever attain the rank of a *Nabī* (Prophet), let alone surpass it, by means of his worship or esoteric practices. Prophethood is a rank bestowed by Allah to whom He wills and cannot be attained by personal effort.
The Qurʾān says:

ونؤمن بما جاء من كراماتهم وصح عن الثقات من رواياتهم

We believe in what we know of the *Karāmāt* (miracles) of the *awliyāʾ* and authentic incidents about them proven from trustworthy sources[148].

ٱللَّهُ أَعۡلَمُ حَيۡثُ يَجۡعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُۥ

Allah knows best where to place His messages.

[Sūra al-Anʿām 124]

[148] The performance of miracles (*karāmāt*) by men of piety (*awliyāʾ*) is proven in the Qurʾān and many narrations of Ḥadīth. The Qurʾān relates to us the miraculous occurrences that took place at the hands of Maryam, may Allah grant her peace:

فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنۢبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا ۖ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيۡهَا زَكَرِيَّا ٱلۡمِحۡرَابَ وَجَدَ عِندَهَا رِزۡقًا ۖ قَالَ يَـٰمَرۡيَمُ أَنَّىٰ لَكِ هَـٰذَا ۖ قَالَتۡ هُوَ مِنۡ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَرۡزُقُ مَن يَشَآءُ بِغَيۡرِ حِسَابٍ

Her Lord graciously accepted her and made her grow in goodness, and entrusted her to the charge of Zakariyyā. Whenever Zakariyyā went in to see her in her sanctuary, he found her supplied with provisions. He said,

'Maryam, how is it you have these provisions?' and she said, 'They are from Allah: Allah provides limitlessly for whoever He wills'.

[Sūra Āl-ʿImrān 37]

The Qur'ān also relates the incident of Āsif ibn Barkhiyā, the companion of the Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ who miraculaously brought to him the throne of Queen Bilqīs in an instance:

قَالَ ٱلَّذِى عِندَهُۥ عِلْمٌ مِّنَ ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ أَنَا۠ ءَاتِيكَ بِهِۦ قَبْلَ أَن يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ ۚ
فَلَمَّا رَءَاهُ مُسْتَقِرًّا عِندَهُۥ قَالَ هَـٰذَا مِن فَضْلِ رَبِّى

One of them who had some knowledge of the Scripture said, 'I will bring it to you in the twinkling of an eye.' When Sulaymān saw it set before him, he said, 'This is a favour from my Lord'

[Sūra al-Naml 40]

There are numerous *aḥādīth* that narrate miraculous incidents of the *awliyā'.*

A *karāma* (miracle) displayed by a saint is a *muʿjiza* (miracle) of his Prophet. The saint is only able to display such a miracle on account of his strict adherence to the teachings of the Prophet. Thus the miracle of the saint is in fact further proof of the truthfulness of the Prophet.

ونؤمن بأشراط الساعة من خروج الدجال ، ونزول عيسى ابن مريم عليه السلام من السماء ، ونؤمن بطلوع الشمس من مغربها ، وخروج دابة الأرض من موضعها

We believe in the signs of the Hour[149] such as the appearance of Dajjāl[150] and the descent of ʿIsā ibn Maryam[151], peace be upon him, from the sky and we believe in the rising of the sun from the west[152] and in the emergence of the Creature from the earth[153].

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149 Authentic narrations regarding the signs of the Hour are numerous. As a principle in matters of ʿAqīda it is necessary for us to believe everything that is related to us in authentic narrations from the Prophet ﷺ. Imām al-Ṭaḥāwī has only mentioned some of the major signs of Qiyāma in this short treatise. The details of each of these signs may be found in books of ḥadīth and books written specifically on this topic, and have been omitted here for sake of brevity.

150 Dajjāl, or the Great Imposter, refers to a one-eyed person who will appear close to Qiyāma and lay claim to divinity. He will traverse the entire earth swiftly except for the cities of *al-Madīna al-Munawwara* and *Makka al-Mukarrama.* The words 'disbeliever' will be inscribed on his forehead.

151 The Prophet ʿIsā ibn Maryam ﷺ will descend from the sky as a follower of our noble Prophet ﷺ and will slay Dajjāl.

152 The Qurʾān states:

هَلۡ يَنظُرُونَ إِلَّآ أَن تَأۡتِيَهُمُ ٱلۡمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ أَوۡ يَأۡتِيَ رَبُّكَ أَوۡ يَأۡتِيَ بَعۡضُ ءَايَٰتِ رَبِّكَۗ
يَوۡمَ يَأۡتِي بَعۡضُ ءَايَٰتِ رَبِّكَ لَا يَنفَعُ نَفۡسًا إِيمَٰنُهَا لَمۡ تَكُنۡ ءَامَنَتۡ مِن قَبۡلُ أَوۡ
كَسَبَتۡ فِيٓ إِيمَٰنِهَا خَيۡرٗاۗ قُلِ ٱنتَظِرُوٓاْ إِنَّا مُنتَظِرُونَ

Are they waiting for the very angels to come to them, or your Lord Himself, or maybe some of His signs? But on the Day some of your Lord's signs come, no soul will profit from faith if it had none before, or has not already earned some good through its faith. Say, 'Wait if you wish: we too are waiting.

[Sūra al-Anʿām 158]

It is recorded in a ḥadīth that explains the above verse:

لا تقوم الساعة حتى تطلع الشمس من مغربها ، فإذا طلعت ورآها الناس آمنوا
أجمعين ، وذلك حين لا ينفع نفسا إيمانها

The Hour will not transpire until the sun rises from the west. When that occurs the entire mankind will bring faith. However it will be a time when no soul will profit from the faith it brings.

[Bukhārī]

153 The Qurʾān tells us:

ولا نصدق كاهنا ولا عرافا ولا من يدعي شيئا يخالف الكتاب والسنة وإجماع الأمة

We do not accept as true any soothsayer nor any fortune-teller[154], nor any person who claims anything which goes against the Book, the Sunna and the consensus of the Umma.

وَإِذَا وَقَعَ ٱلْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَخْرَجْنَا لَهُمْ دَآبَّةً مِّنَ ٱلْأَرْضِ تُكَلِّمُهُمْ أَنَّ ٱلنَّاسَ كَانُوا۟ بِـَٔايَـٰتِنَا لَا يُوقِنُونَ

When the verdict is given against them, We shall bring a creature out of the earth, which will tell them that people had no faith in Our revelations.

[Sūra al-Naml 82]

[154] The Prophet ﷺ said:

من أتى عرافا أو كاهنا فصدقه بما يقول فقد كفر بما أنزل على محمد

Whoever visits a soothsayer or fortune-teller and believes what he says has committed disbelief in that which has been revealed to Muḥammad.

[Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd, Nasāʾī]

ونرى الجماعة حقا وصوابا ، والفرقة زيغا وعذابا

We regard (the way of) the group (of Muslims) as the true and right path and separation (from that way) as deviation and torment[155].

ودين الله في الأرضِ والسماء واحد وهو دين الإسلام قال الله تعالى

﴿ إِنَّ ٱلدِّينَ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ٱلۡإِسۡلَٰمُ ﴾ وقال تعالى ﴿ وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ ٱلۡإِسۡلَٰمَ دِينًا ﴾

The religion of Allah in the heavens and the earth is one and that is the religion of Islam (Submission)[156]. Allah, Most High, says: "*Surely*

Allah has kept knowledge of the unseen exclusively for Himself. None of the creation of Allah has knowledge of this except for those of His messengers whom Allah has chosen to favour with revelation:

عَٰلِمُ ٱلۡغَيۡبِ فَلَا يُظۡهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيۡبِهِۦٓ أَحَدًا ﴿٢٦﴾ إِلَّا مَنِ ٱرۡتَضَىٰ مِن رَّسُولٖ فَإِنَّهُۥ

يَسۡلُكُ مِنۢ بَيۡنِ يَدَيۡهِ وَمِنۡ خَلۡفِهِۦ رَصَدٗا

(He is) the Knower of the Unseen. He does not disclose it except to a messenger of His choosing.

[Sūra al-Jinn 26-27]

155 Refer to the earlier discussion on this.

religion in the sight of Allah is Islam"[157]. And He also says: "*I am pleased with Islam as a religion for you*."[158]

وهو بين الغلوِ والتقصير ، وبين التشبيهِ والتعطيل ، وبين الجبر والقدر ، وبين الأمن والإياس

It (the religion of Allah) lies between going to excess and falling short, between *Tashbīh* (likening Allah to anything else), and *Taʿṭīl* (denying Allah's attributes), between *Jabr* (fatalism) and *Qadar* (refusing decree as proceeding from Allah) and between *Amn* (feeling safe

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[156] All of creation in the heavens and the earth including the angels, jinn and mankind are required to believe in the Oneness of Allah and in His names and attributes. They are also required to believe in the message of the prophets, in the beginning of creation and resurrection. This in essence is the religion of Islam and is the only acceptable creed in the sight of Allah:

وَمَن يَبۡتَغِ غَيۡرَ ٱلۡإِسۡلَٰمِ دِينٗا فَلَن يُقۡبَلَ مِنۡهُ وَهُوَ فِي ٱلۡأٓخِرَةِ مِنَ ٱلۡخَٰسِرِينَ

If anyone seeks a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him: he will be one of the losers in the Hereafter.

[Sūra Āl-ʿImrān 85]

[157] Sūra Āl-ʿImrān 19

[158] Sūra al-Māʾida 3

without being conscious of Allah’s reckoning) and *Iyās* (despairing of Allah’s mercy)[159].

فهذا ديننا واعتقادنا ظاهرا وباطنا ، ونحن برآء إلى الله من كل من خالف الذي ذكرناه وبيناه ، ونسأل الله تعالى أن يثبتنا على الإيمان ويختم لنا به ، ويعصمنا من الأهواء المختلفة والآراء المتفرقة والمذاهب الردية مثل المشبهة والمعتزلة والجهمية والجبرية والقدرية ، وغيرهم من الذين خالفوا السنة والجماعة وحالفوا الضلالة ، ونحن منهم براء وهم عندنا ضلال وأردياء ، وبالله العصمة والتوفيق ، انتهى.

This is our religion and it is what we believe in, both inwardly and outwardly, and we renounce any connection, before Allah, with anyone who goes against what we have said and made clear.

We ask Allah to make us firm in our belief and seal our lives with it and to protect us from variant ideas, scattered opinions and rejected

[159] Refer to the previous discussions on this.

schools of view such as those of the *Mushabbiha*[160], the *Muʿtazila*[161], the *Jahmiyya*[162] the *Jabariyya*[163], the *Qadariyya*[164] and others like them who go against the Way and the Group (*Al-Sunna wa l-Jamāʿa*) and have allied themselves with error. We renounce any connection with them and in our opinion they are in error and astray.

We ask Allah to protect us from all falsehood and we ask His Grace and Favour to do all good.[165]

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160 The *Mushabbiha* refers to those who resembled Allah, Most High, to the creation.

161 The followers of ʿAmr ibn ʿUbayd and Wāṣil ibn ʿAṭāʾ were called *Muʿtazila* (the Dissenters) due to their non conformity to the *Ahl al-Sunna wa l-Jamāʿa* in many fundamentals of belief.

162 These were the followers of Jahm ibn Ṣafwān who denied the attributes of Allah and held that man has no ability to acquire his own actions. They also held the view of the eventual destruction of Paradise and Hell.

163 This refers to a group who held beliefs similar to that of the *Jahmiyya* with respect to man's inability to acquire his own actions.

164 The *Qadariyya* were a group who believed that man is the creator of his own actions and denied that disbelief and sin are by the decree of Allah.

165 Completed on 22 *Rabī al-Thānī* 1432 (A.H) corresponding to 27 March 2011 in Durban, South Africa.

About this Book

This short treatise on ʿAqīda (Islamic theology) written by Imām Ṭaḥāwī though small in size, is a basic text for all times, listing what a Muslim must know and believe.

The importance of this text lies in the fact that it corroborates the views of Imām Abū Ḥanīfa, the founder of the Ḥanafī school of jurisprudence, that have come down to us from different sources. Imām Ṭaḥāwi summarizes the views of the great Imām and shows that they were in conformity with the traditional views of the orthodox school.

The doctrines enumerated in this work are entirely derived from the undisputed primary sources of religion, the Qurʾān and the confirmed Ḥadīth.

This text, representative of the viewpoint of *Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jamāʿa*, has long been the most widely acclaimed, and indeed indispensable, reference work on Muslim beliefs.

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